



THE INDEPENDENT

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TODAY'S NEWS

Has Tory policy on schooling worked?

New types of schools promoted by the last government feature prominently in a list of the most-improved schools published yesterday. Conservatives said their policies had been vindicated.

Just 240 schools out of more than 5,000 in this year's league tables have improved every year for the past four years. One in three is grant-maintained, including the London Oratory, where the Prime Minister sends his children, and four of the 20 most improved are city technology colleges.

City technology colleges and the 667 grant-maintained schools have been more generously financed than other schools. The colleges usually test and interview applicants to ensure they admit the full range of ability, and some non-selective grant-maintained schools interview prospective pupils. Under Labour, both will lose some of their independence over admissions and will be funded in the same way as other schools. Stephen Dorrell, shadow education secretary, said: "I warmly welcome the fact that Labour have adopted the important Conservative policy of publishing league tables. Why does Mr Blunkett [David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education] insist on destroying the grant-maintained system when the evidence points so unambiguously to its success?" Government sources denied the list was embarrassing: "There is a good cross-section of schools of all categories ... Of course a representative proportion will be grant-maintained."

Teachers, who criticise the tables for giving only raw scores and not taking into account schools' intake, questioned whether the new improvement index was a true reflection of performance. Mr Blunkett defended the index: he believes it gives parents a fairer picture of their children's schools. He promised that new "value-added tables" comparing a school's intake with its exam performance would be piloted from next year.

However, the tables reveal how difficult it is for schools to maintain that improvement: 416 had better results in both 1995 and 1996, only to see them drop again this year.

The top local authority at GCSE for the second year running, is the Isles of Scilly, with one school where 61.6 per cent of pupils are getting good grades. The bottom is Hull, which displaces last year's worst authority, Islington, London. Hull also has the highest truancy rate.

The best-performing school at A-level was fee-paying King Edward's School, Birmingham, where pupils scored an average of between three and four As per candidate. The best state comprehensive at A-level was Lady Manners' School, Bakewell, Derbyshire, where pupils scored an average of nearly three A grades each.

Why cancer campaigns help kill smokers

Britain has one of the worst survival rates from lung cancer in the west – partly because smokers feel so guilty. Anti-smoking campaigns are making them delay seeking medical treatment out of embarrassment, according to a study. Indeed, negative attitudes dominate the treatment of the disease, which kills 100 people a day in Britain. Smokers feel guilty about having brought the problem on themselves; doctors feel there is no hope; and there is little public interest in a disease that principally kills the old and the poor. Page 4

Chaplin film revealed

A revealing documentary film about Charlie Chaplin, hidden for a lifetime and never shown, has come to light in a garage. He probably kept the film out of the public eye because it stressed his working class origins – produced in 1928, it provides a rare account of Chaplin's childhood in south London and suggests that his hallmark boots and trousers were inspired by the everyday clothes he saw worn in Lambeth. Page 4

World's best advert?

The advert for Blackcurrant Tango which features a hysterical, xenophobic spokesman running around in purple boxer shorts is the best TV advertisement in the world. That's the verdict, anyway, of the London International Advertising Awards, where it beat off 7,000 entries from 78 countries. Page 3

Barbie gets boob job

The figure that Barbie, that doll amongst dolls, has managed to maintain for almost four decades is not, it seems, altogether realistic. Mattel, the toy company that created Barbie in 1959, have decided that the illusion is unsustainable and are to reduce the size of her breasts. Column One, Page 2

Terror at the feet of an Egyptian Queen



Security men carry away the body of one of the attackers after the massacre

Photograph: Reuters

At least 60 people, including two Britons as well as Swiss, French, Japanese and Spanish tourists, were shot dead by gunmen in front of an ancient temple at Luxor in upper Egypt yesterday in the bloodiest incident of the country's five-year Islamist rebellion.

Robert Fisk says the killers have destroyed one of Egypt's biggest earners – foreign tourism – for perhaps years to come.

In Egypt yesterday, they went for the jugular. What else does the massacre at Luxor – where as many as 63 tourists were slaughtered and another 17 wounded – mean but a declaration of war against the Egyptian government, an attack that strikes at the very heart of the billion-dollar tourist industry?

The six gunmen who turned the courtyard of the 3,400-year-old temple of Queen Hatshepsut into a bloodbath, mowing down the European and Japanese tourists after they had climbed from their bus, were almost certainly members of the Gema's Islamiya (Islamic group) who have been waging an armed conflict with the government since 1992, claiming President Hosni Mubarak's regime is corrupt and un-Islamic.

Most of the tourists had just descended from their bus 500m from the imposing, recently restored colonnaded temple that stands beneath towering cliffs on the west bank of the Nile who six gunmen – all dressed in black – ran towards them, firing

automatic weapons. Screaming in pain and fear, many of the foreigners tried to take cover, falling over each other in their panic.

The gunmen tried to hijack another bus to escape and further casualties followed during a gun battle between the killers and the police. One eyewitness said panicking security police themselves shot dead three French tourists. At least two Egyptian

civilians were killed and another nine wounded. Egyptian state television last night claimed all six killers had been shot by the police after being pursued into the desert.

It was a massacre on an Algerian scale, the most ferocious since the start of the five-year uprising. The government in Cairo has repeatedly guaranteed that Egypt – despite a fire-bomb attack on a bus load of German tourists in September that left nine dead – was safe for foreign visitors. Now the gunmen at Luxor have turned their words to dust.

Almost as shocking for President Mubarak is that the gunman should have attacked at Luxor, which has a considerable Christian population and appeared an oasis of security amid the conflict in upper Egypt. Last night, Luxor was under curfew.

Even after September's attack, important questions remained unanswered; the government claimed there were only two attackers, while eye-witnesses saw up to six. The gun-battle between police and gunmen in Luxor reportedly lasted three hours. Why did it take armed police so long to overcome six men?

The six were thought to have dressed in black clothes to look like members of Egypt's black-uniformed security police. Last night, lying in make-shift mortuaries, many of the dead remained unidentified; they had surrendered their passports before their visit to the Valley of the Queens. Other victims lay where they fell and were still there at nightfall – which means the death toll could rise to as high as 90.

Last month, imprisoned members of the Gema's Islamiya were calling upon their brothers for a ceasefire and an end to the killing of foreigners. The Egyptian government contemptuously turned the offer down.

TOURISTS FLEE

Thomson, Britain's biggest holiday company, which has 1,300 clients in Egypt, said it was cancelling Egypt-bound flights tomorrow and would fly home any clients who wish to return early. Saga Holidays, which specialises in holidays for pensioners, said it was bringing its clients home and cancelling flights. Thomas Cook, which has 270 people on holiday in Egypt, also offered to fly people home.

The Foreign Office, which until yesterday was advising travellers to be "vigilant", expressed shock and regret at the attack, but issued no new advice.

A Swedish travel company cancelled all trips to Egypt and said it would bring home all customers on holiday there. Fridtjof Resor has about 1,000 people on holiday in Egypt.

Jihan Salah, a spokesman for an Egyptian travel company, said yesterday:

"The image for the long run is really bleak." But Egypt's tourism minister, Mamoudi el-Batagi, insisted: "Egypt is no less safe than any destination including the United Kingdom, Europe, the United States and everywhere."

Mobile phone drivers put their foot in it

Drivers who use phones in the car have started to develop a new motoring technique – driving at 70mph without use of their hands while making complex business deals.

The decision to abandon traditional driving methods in favour of the legs and knees variety has prompted the police in the West Midlands to launch a crackdown on motorway drivers with dangerous mobile phone habits.

Examples of reckless driving captured by the police include a salesman who had his phone in one hand and an order book in another. Asked how he managed to control his vehicle, he replied: "I have developed the technique of driving with my knees."

Another man talking on his mobile on

the motorway was having difficulty hearing so used his spare hand to cover his ear, leaving the front seat passenger to steer.

A lorry driver trundling along the motorway was filmed steering a 40-tonne truck with his left foot. His right leg was resting on the dashboard while his hands were concentrating on dialling.

Acting Superintendent Paul Austin, who is heading the clampdown for the West Midlands Police, said: "The worst cases are often where the driver turns the car into an office. They have their papers spread out, their order book open, and they make deals on the phone. Watching where they are going seems a low priority."

He also tells of the case of a woman who was caught twice driving dangerously because she spent most of her time in the car

arranging her seven children's lives by phone.

Supt Austin insists if any motorist is going to have a conversation they should pull over and stop the car. Police motorway patrols, some fitted with video cameras, are being used in the West Midlands to target offenders.

Earlier this month, the Government threatened to introduce tough new laws if motorists failed to stop using mobile telephones at the wheel.

The police currently have the power to charge motorists whose driving was affected by using a telephone, under existing offences such as careless or dangerous driving. Lawbreakers can face up to two years in jail plus a fine.

— Jason Benetto

INSIDE TODAY

A world ruled by women

10/YOUNG BRITAIN

At last, a computer game that taxes your brain – by Douglas Adams
NETWORK+



School League Tables 1997: 12-page special supplement
INSIDE

Chicago: Nigel Planer goes to jail
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2/BRIEFING

COLUMN ONE

Barbie starts to sag as middle age looms

There was shocking news yesterday for boys and girls alike: the fabulous legs-to-armpits figure that Barbie, that doll amongst dolls, has managed to maintain for almost four decades is not, well, altogether realistic. If you have been scouring every bar on earth for a perfect look-alike or, listen up ladies, if you have been aspiring to attain those dynamic measurements for yourself, you can give up right now. It ain't going to happen.

The folk at Mattel, the toy company that first gave us Barbie in 1959, have decided that the illusion is no longer sustainable. Were she a real gal, Barbie would come in at 38-18-34. But not for much longer.

It is true, Barbie is to become anatomically—even politically—correct. Starting next year, America's icon of impossible beauty is going to be given a little plastic surgery and it will not be a question of pinch and lift. Rather, Barbie is actually going to be allowed to sag a little.

The new Barbie body will only be revealed at the annual New York toy show next January. Cellulite dimples may not be on the surgeon's mission list but this we know: her waist will fill out, while her hips and, most stunningly, her jutting bosom will undergo some judicious trimming.

There will be a new Barbie face too. In fact, it will be face Mark IV. The current visage—all grin and sparkly blue eyes—is version number three, introduced in 1977. From next year, she will be altogether less superstar and more natural-looking with closed mouth and straight hair.

The implications of the makeover are, of course, grave. Barbie owners the world over will be forced to open their piggy banks and invest in the new model of their heroine. (Already Barbie dolls sell as the rate of two a second). Then there will be the new wardrobe to buy. Mattel is not stupid.

And what of the legions of radical feminists who have made careers out of lambasting Barbie for presenting to little girls an impossible image and sending whole generations headlong into lives of eating disorders and depression?

Mattel, by the way, says such sniping had nothing to do with the revamp. Said one company spokesman: "We've always been sensitive to that issue, but it wasn't the basis for our decision". Instead, apparently, it's all about giving Barbie a "contemporary look that's more natural and today".

No one in the meantime seems to be worrying about whether Barbie's long-time friend Ken (can it still be platonic?) might also need a more "today" look. *Men's Fitness* magazine recently reported that translating his manly physique into human dimensions, keeping everything more or less in proportion, would make him 7ft 8in tall.

— David Usborne
New York

PEOPLE



Quentin Tarantino in \$5m assault claim

Only in Hollywood could getting smacked in the mouth make you \$5m. Quentin Tarantino (pictured above with wife, Gretchen), hotshot director of *Pulp Fiction* and *Reservoir Dogs* is being sued for \$5m (£3m) by Don Murphy, the associate producer of the Tarantino-scripted violencefest that was *Natural Born Killers*.

In real life, Mr Murphy is obviously less enamoured of violence than his movies would make you think. According to documents lodged in the Superior Court in California, the delicate Mr Murphy needs the \$5m because he has been unable to work since being slammed against a wall by Tarantino last month and then punched in the head and face. Mr Murphy claims it is the pain from the attack that has kept him from working.

While the characters in Mr Murphy and Tarantino's films usually perpetrate their violence in unpleasant cellars and run down warehouses, in this case Mr Murphy alleges the attack took place at the trendy West Hollywood restaurant, AGO. The law suit is ironic in that during filming of *Natural Born Killers*, the female star, Juliette Lewis, broke the nose of actor Tom Sizemore when she slammed him too enthusiastically into a wall. It is not known if Sizemore was able to claim \$5m for a month off work. *Natural Born Killers* recounted the story of Mickey and Mallory, serial killers and lovers who travelled along America's Route 66 conducting stylised mass-slaughter just for the hell of it.

It is yet to be revealed what the source of the enmity between Tarantino and Mr Murphy is, but Tarantino was so appalled by the changes made to his script for director Oliver Stone, that he has disowned the film. In contrast to Mr Murphy's squeamishness, *Natural Born Killers* needed 150 shots to be cut before it could get a R rating in the US.

— Paul McCann

Europhile defects from Tories to Lib-Dems

One of the Conservative Party's original Thatcherites, Lord Thomas of Swynerton, defected to the Liberal Democrats yesterday.

As Hugh Thomas, the latest Tory scalp in Paddy Ashdown's belt was chairman of the right-wing Centre for Policy Studies from 1979-1990—the entire period of Margaret Thatcher's period in office.

But in spite of Baroness Thatcher's remarkable track record as a basher of the European Community, Lord Thomas

said yesterday that he "had switched parties because Conservative attitudes towards the European Union as it is presently constituted, and as it is likely to develop, have become ever more critical and sceptical.

"Ironically, I resigned from the Labour Party in 1974 partly because of its attitude to Europe, and joined the Conservatives, since they were then the party of Europe. I have all my life supported the idea of the full participation of this country in the great European adventure begun in the

1950s, and have regretted our tardy responses to our neighbours' initiatives."

Lord Thomas added that he had become ill at ease in a party that had become so hostile on the critical issue of the European single currency.

A historian by profession, and currently visiting professor at the University of Boston, Lord Thomas, 66, is the author of books about the Spanish civil war, Suez, and the Cuban revolution.

— Anthony Bevins.

UPDATE

LEISURE

Something nasty in the fish tank

Keeping tropical fish has traditionally been regarded as the safe and easy option for pet-lovers. But yesterday doctors warned of a hitherto unforeseen danger facing fish enthusiasts: fish tank granuloma.

Five cases of this potentially serious skin infection, caused by aquatic bacteria, have been reported recently by doctors at the Royal Sussex County Hospital in Brighton. Each of the afflicted patients kept tropical fish and had immersed an unprotected hand in the tank water of their pets. There was already a cut or abrasion on each person's hand, and the *Mycobacterium marinum* present in the water led to an infection of the area.

— Louise Hancock



HEALTH

Nutty way to a longer life

Eating nuts five or more times a week may help you live a longer, healthier life, scientists said yesterday. A study of 14,000 vegetarians, semi-vegetarians and health-conscious meat eaters in the UK revealed a 23 per cent lower than average death rate from all causes among people who ate lots of nuts. "Nuts are good sources of vitamin E, other antioxidant nutrients, and linoleic acid," the researchers reported in the journal *Heart*. Vegetarianism was associated with a slight, but not significant, reduction in death rate, and the group as a whole suffered half as much heart disease as the UK population as a whole.

SOCIETY

Product links helping selected few

Cause-related marketing, where a company builds a relationship with good causes for their mutual benefit, has been a success, but charities fear that less fashionable causes may be missing out. Business in the Community, a charity which promotes links between firms and community organisations, said that its study, the Game Plan, showed that 80 per cent of customers want to buy goods linked to a cause, such as Andrex toilet paper and Guide Dogs for the Blind.

But Jim Minton, marketing manager for the National Council for Voluntary Organisations warned: "The potential issue is that how much are companies thinking 'oh, these causes are the ones consumers want'—ones with children and animals, whereas the less fashionable causes will find it more difficult and may well miss out again."

— Glenda Cooper

TOURIST RATES

Australia (dollars)	2.33	Italy (lira)	2,792
Austria (schillings)	19.97	Japan (yen)	208.56
Belgium (francs)	58.67	Malta (lira)	0.63
Canada (\$)	2.32	Netherlands (guilders)	3.20
Cyprus (pounds)	0.83	Norway (krone)	11.67
Denmark (kroner)	10.88	Portugal (escudos)	288.10
France (francs)	9.51	Spain (pesetas)	238.85
Germany (marks)	2.85	Sweden (kroner)	12.43
Greece (drachmai)	449.33	Switzerland (francs)	2.32
Hong Kong (\$)	12.64	Turkey (lira)	301.745
Ireland (pounds)	1.09	USA (\$)	1.65

Source: Thomas Cook

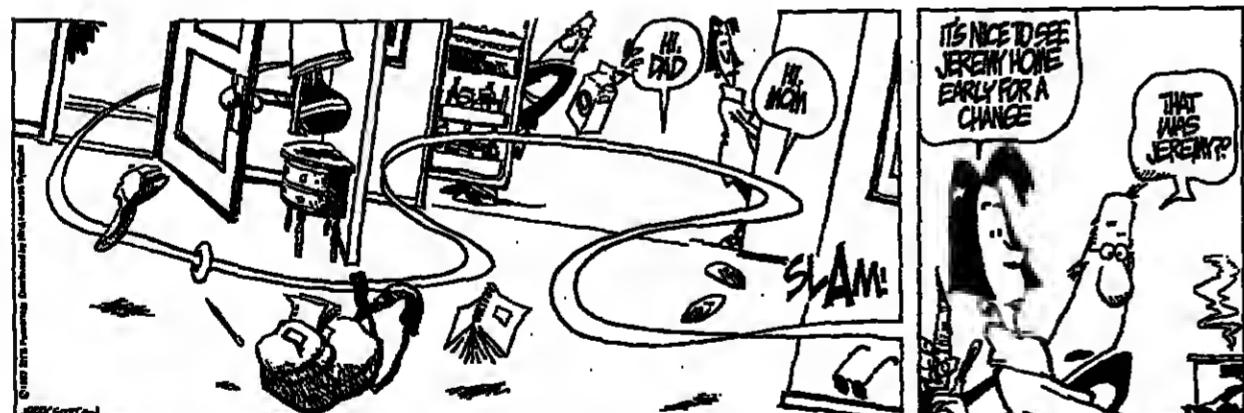
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ZITS

by Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman



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by Chris Priestley

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3/LEADING STORIES

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Police say killing of Devon teenager was planned

A 14-year-old girl who was found murdered at the weekend in Devon had her throat slit, it was disclosed yesterday. Jason Bennett, Crime Correspondent, reports on the hunt for a killer.



Kate Bushell: Died doing a good turn

The attack on Kate Bushell as she walked a dog near her home on a country path was planned, police said yesterday. Her killer cut the girl's throat, almost certainly with a knife, and used great control and ferocity. She did not appear to have been raped, but detectives carried out tests to establish whether her attacker tried to assault her sexually.

The teenager's fully clothed body was found by her father on Saturday evening in a field 300 yards from her family's home on a housing estate at Exwick, on the outskirts of Exeter, after she failed to return from a walk. Detective Superintendent Mike Stephens said that Kate's throat was cut with a sharp instrument which has yet to be recovered.

"It was obviously a mindless, ruthless attack which ripped the girl's throat. It was a premeditated attack by a killer who had

control of themselves and the victim," he said. The killer could strike again, he added.

Samples of blood had been sent for analysis and police have co-opted a criminal psychologist to help draw up a profile of the likely suspect. Kate, described as a caring, bright, music-loving youngster, was attacked while taking her neighbour's dog, a Jack Russell called Gemma, for a short walk along a path near Exwick Lane.

When she failed to return by 6.45pm, her

father, Jeremy, and mother Susan, began a search by car, then called the police who there was no sign of her.

Kate was found at 7.35pm by her father in the corner of a field which she had reached by climbing over a stile from Exwick Lane. The body was lying near a country path and was not concealed. Detectives believe Kate was murdered at the scene.

Some of her clothing was disturbed, indicating a possible sexual motive. Police estimate that about 100 people use the walkway each day.

Yesterday more than 100 officers continued the murder hunt and carried out house inquiries. The police appealed to householders to check their dustbins to see if anything had been thrown into them and asked them to look out for knives or blood-stained clothing. The dog involved has been examined forensically to see whether there were any DNA samples from the killer, but results are not expected for a few days.

There have been a number of reports about individuals spotted in the area at the time of the murder, but there are no positive leads.

Pupils at Kate's school have suggested establishing a memorial to her.

Runaway, 13, thought to be in Britain

The mother of a 13-year-old girl believed to have run away with a 47-year-old man she met in Spain has spoken for the first time about the affair. As Katy Marks reports, she made an emotional appeal for her daughter to contact her.



Sally Clayton: Met man in Spain

Sally Clayton, 13, is thought to have gone missing with Bruce Alborough-Tregear, a British man whom she got to know while helping out in a bar run by her mother in the Spanish beach resort of Fuenfriola.

Her friends have told police that she spoke to him twice on the telephone after returning from Spain two weeks ago. The second occasion was last Friday, the day before she disappeared.

Yesterday her mother, Sharon Walsh, 32, appealed at a police press conference in Harlow, Essex, for Sally, her only child, to get in touch. "No matter what she has done, I will always love her," she said. "I want to

know anything, even just to know she is alive. If she wants to go elsewhere or anything, as long as I know she's just out there. I just really, really want her to phone me or get someone else to phone me. She can come home and we can sort it all out."

Although Sally left with her summer clothes and passport, police believe she is still in Britain. She disappeared from her home in Harlow while her mother, who is divorced from Sally's father, was out with her boyfriend, Mark McIntyre. Police have a note apparently written by the girl and handed to them by Ms Walsh. In it, she says she hates her mother and Mr McIntyre, but makes no mention of Mr Alborough-Tregear.

Police said they were also following a second line of enquiry based on suggestions that Sally could be with a different man who is nearer her own age.

Mr McIntyre, 43, told the press conference that he and Ms Walsh had not been aware of anything untoward between Sally and the older man.

Mr Alborough-Tregear, who is believed to use other names, had told the family he was divorced with grown-up children and had connections in the Wiltshire area. They met him again by chance on the ferry home.

Detective Inspector Graham Hancock said police wanted him to contact them, if only to say that he was out with Sally. "We are anxious to eliminate Bruce from our enquiries," he said. Interpol has been informed of the girl's disappearance and ports have been alerted.



Purple reign: The Tango advert that beat 7,000 entries to the advertising world's most coveted prize

Purple passion puts
Tango on top of the
advertising world

The advert for
Blackcurrant Tango has
won nearly every
advertising award in
Britain. Last night it
won the world's highest
advertising accolade.

Paul McCann, Media
Correspondent, asks
if advertising can be
so good that it becomes
art.

angrier until he is outside,
stripping down to a pair
of blackcurrant-coloured
shorts.

The Tango spokesman
then marches to a field
supported by 400 cheering
extras where a boxing ring is
set up. Here he challenges
the boy and the whole of
France to a fight. As the
camera pans back and the
music swells the boxing ring
is seen perched above the
White Cliffs of Dover.

The ITC dismissed the
complaints on the grounds
that the humour of the
commercial was in the same
tradition of xenophobic
British humour as Alf
Garnett or Basil Fawlty.

The £500,000 advert
received plaudits from
outside the advertising
industry when the Institute
of Contemporary Arts
included it in an exhibition
this year to illustrate how art
could come from commercial
sources.

Kate Bush, curator of the
ICA's Assuming Positions
exhibition, said the advert
was used because it was
technically brilliant as well
as self-knowing. "It starts off
dull and builds to a
wonderful cinematic climax.
You could read it as real
laddishness and repugnant
xenophobia, but at the same
time you know it knows all
that about itself and is a
parody. This helps it
transcend being an advert
and becomes art."

Mike Cozens, creative
director of rival agency
Young & Rubicam, said:
"It's been a great hit with
punters as well as with
advertising juries, which
doesn't always follow. It's
good to see such a
mainstream brand like this
winning awards for its
advertising; it's often more
obscure brands that win,
which is sometimes
questionable."

Organic food from Sainsbury's. The widest supermarket selection across the country.*



Sainsbury's now sell more than 50 types of organic food in over 200 stores. Our commitment to extending this range means working continuously

with a large number of suppliers.

Organic farmers make use of different methods, such as crop rotation and natural predators instead of

pesticides and fungicides.

It's another way of helping to preserve and enhance the wildlife habitats, which gives us something to crow about.

Sainsbury's
FRESH FOOD, FRESH IDEAS.

Lung cancer toll worsened by attitudes

Britain has one of the worst survival rates from lung cancer in the West. Jeremy Lawrence, Health Editor, finds the reasons are medical pessimism and smokers' guilt.

Anti-smoking campaigns are adding to the suffering of smokers by making them delay seeking medical treatment out of embarrassment, according to a study.

Negative attitudes dominate the treatment of lung cancer in Britain which kills more people than any other cancer. Smokers feel guilty about having brought the problem on themselves, doctors feel there is no hope and there is little public interest in a disease that principally kills the old and the poor.

The campaign was launched as the Government announced the cost of smoking to the NHS was between £1.4bn and £1.7bn a year - more than twice previous estimates.

Tessa Jowell, the public health minister, said: "This is an appalling drain on the NHS and an enormous human cost to smokers ...

"We need tough action at both a domestic and European level to bring down rates of smoking."

Nicholas Young, chief executive of Macmillan Cancer Relief, said the campaign would aim to tackle the negative attitude to the disease which he described as the "forgotten cancer".

"High-profile anti-smoking campaigns engender guilt in lung cancer sufferers who become stoical and undemanding about their care. They are the largest group of cancer patients in the world and they are neglected."

nothing can be done - pervades attitudes to the disease. We need to get away from that."

Unlike other cancers there had never been a powerful patient lobby for lung cancer victims because of their poor survival. They died too soon and the disease was consequently neglected.

A survey by Macmillan Cancer Relief found that almost a third of lung cancer patients had delayed going to the doctor for up to four months despite having symptoms including coughing up blood, loss of weight and chest pains.

Only a quarter were referred by GPs to a specialist within a week, as the guidelines on treatment dictate, and some waited more than a month for the diagnosis. More than half complained they had had inadequate care from the NHS.

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"High-profile anti-smoking campaigns engender guilt in lung cancer sufferers who become stoical and undemanding about their care. They are the largest group of cancer patients in the world and they are neglected."



Out of London: Charlie Chaplin, left, suppressed the film about his life, which focused on his humble origins south of the river. He was played by Chick Wango, above, who is seen in the comic's childhood haunts. Photograph (left): MSI

Found: film Chaplin didn't find funny

A documentary film about Charlie Chaplin, suppressed by him and never shown, has been found after 70 years. David Lister suggests that Chaplin kept the film out of the public eye because it stressed his working-class origins.

A warts-and-all documentary film about Charlie Chaplin, suppressed by him and never shown, has been found in a garage.

The 35mm silent film, created and produced in 1928 by Harry B. Parkinson, one of the pioneers of the film industry, provides a rare account of the comic's working-class childhood in south London, as well as some of the people and places that influenced him.

Most notably, the film suggests that Chaplin's hallmark boots and trousers were inspired by the everyday clothes he saw worn at East Lane Market in Lambeth.

Chaplin, who had moved to Hollywood by the time the film was made, stopped it from being shown. It is likely he would

have been annoyed that it revealed so much about his poor origins. In addition, he probably did not enjoy the idea of someone playing him. The film uses a figure, largely shown in shadow, played by the actor Chick Wango, pretending to be Chaplin visiting his old haunts.

The family of the late Harry Parkinson are selling the film at Christie's next month, after a family member found it on top of a cupboard in her garage.

During the 42-minute film, entitled *The Life Story of Charlie Chaplin*, Parkinson draws comparisons between Chaplin's Beverly Hills home and the London streets where he grew up. Parkinson suggests that East Street, Walworth, south London, could have been the inspiration for Chaplin's film *Easy Street*.

Background details of Chaplin's family are given, particularly his father's career as a music hall singer. There is footage of some of the local schools that Charlie Chaplin attended.

Images of London include his old lodgings in Pownall Terrace, Lambeth, Lambeth Baths and Kennington Park Gymnasium. Scenes of children playing in the Lambeth streets are used by Parkinson to imply that Chaplin used the experience of his childhood in his characterisation of *The Tramp*.

There is approximately half a minute of newsreel footage of Chaplin's triumphant return to England in 1921; that is followed by footage of a garret room in Lambeth. Parkinson used the stark contrast between Chaplin's early lodgings and the splendour of his suite of rooms at The Ritz, where he stayed on his visit to London, to emphasise the change in Chaplin's fortunes.

Chaplin died in 1977 aged 88, two years after being knighted. Parkinson died in 1970, aged 86. His elderly relative who found the film, who does not wish to be named, said: "We always thought Chaplin had it banned because he was embarrassed about his poor background. When I was given the film I remember being told it would be worth a lot of money one day. But I forgot all about it ... I didn't know what to expect, but it was wonderful to see it, with bits from his childhood together with clips from newsreel and bits from America."

Affair in Bosnia led to wife's murder, court told

A senior RAF officer went on trial yesterday accused of murdering his wife. Kiru Sengupta was in court as a jury was told an illicit affair in war-torn Bosnia led to the killing at a Suffolk lake.

RAF Squadron Leader Nicholas Tucker murdered his wife in a staged car accident after having an affair with a young Serbian translator he had met in Bosnia while serving as an UN observer, Norwich Crown Court was told yesterday.

Mr Tucker, a 44-year-old father of two teenage children, was "infatuated" with 21-year-old Djuna Dudakovic who was described as "very slim, very attractive with curly blonde hair". The prosecution claimed that it was this relationship which lay

behind the killing of 52-year-old Carol Tucker.

After meeting Ms Dudakovic, the RAF squadron leader applied to extend his tour of duty in Bosnia, the court heard. He stayed with her at the RAF club in Finsbury, London, after helping her to come to this country on a short visit, and then killed his wife by driving a car into the River Lark in Suffolk, the jury was told.

Following the incident, Squadron Leader Tucker maintained the car had swerved into the water when his wife grabbed the steering wheel to avoid hitting a herd of deer. He was rescued with minor grazes to the forehead, while Mrs Tucker's body was discovered face down under a bridge, where police officers failed to resuscitate her.

A Home Office pathologist, David Harrison, concluded that Mrs Tucker had bruising on the left side of her chest "consistent

with recent finger pressure", grasp marks on her upper arm, and abrasions under her left arm. There were no marks on her neck, but the prosecution claimed that suffocation could have been caused "with a ligature like an armlock" or "fingers, not dug in".

The fatal crash took place on the evening of 21 July 1995, after Mr and Mrs Tucker had been out for dinner at the Red Lion, near Honington, Suffolk.

After leaving the pub, Mr Tucker claimed he missed a turning and killed his wife by driving a car into the river. He told detectives that he was driving at around 50mph at the time of the accident. But police calculations show that the car had been travelling at less than 31mph and it had slowed to around 10mph when it hit the river bed.

Mr Tucker, of Honington, Suffolk, denies murder.

The case continues.

Danes buy Glenfeshie

Conservationists have lost out to a Danish family-owned company in their bid for the Highland Glenfeshie estate, it was revealed yesterday.

A multi-agency public bid was beaten by Danstrup Land Holding A/S, owned by Klaus Helmersen, who is believed to have paid around £6m. The sale has angered conservationists who were hoping to save the 42,000-acre estate from potential harm because it is home to thousands of ancient trees. They claim its management is crucial to the success of maintaining the Cairngorms in order to achieve World Heritage Status.

The Ramblers' Association Scottish officer Dave Morris said: "It is a scandal that the Glenfeshie land lottery continues ... Why should Scotland allow the heart of the Cairngorms to be placed at the mercy of anyone with a big enough cheque book to outbid the public purse?"

DAILY POEM

But for Lust

by Ruth Pitter

But for lust we could be friends,
On each other's necks could woe;
In each other's arms could sleep
In the calm the cradle lents;

Lends a while, and takes away,
But for hunger, but for fear,
Calm could be our day and year
From the yellow to the grey;

From the gold to the grey hair,
But for passion could we rest,
But for passion we could feast
On compassion everywhere.

Even in this night I know
By the awful living dead,
By this craving tear I shed,
Somewhere, somewhere it is so.

Ruth Pitter was born in Ilford on 7 November 1897 and died in 1992. In the course of a long writing career she won the Hawthornden Prize, the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry, and was made a CBE. To mark her centenary, Enitharmon Press have issued Ruth Pitter's *Collected Poems*, introduced by Elizabeth Jennings (£10.95).

Constable guilty of assault

A police constable was convicted yesterday of assaulting a student at a festival for the homeless. Paul Evans, 32, from Stoke Newington police station in London, was also convicted by a jury at the Old Bailey of affray.

Six other officers from the same station were all cleared of various charges relating to an alleged "brutal attack" they faced after the music festival for Hackney's homeless in north London in May 1994.

Police were called in after trouble allegedly erupted on the Saturday night. The defence claims that officers were called pigs and bastards and bottles thrown at them. Michael Austin-Smith QC, for Evans, said the officer "lost his cool" in the heat of the moment. He said the police had faced a "tritious situation. It was chaos".

The prosecution had alleged that Evans and other officers all from Stoke Newington police station had been involved in an unprovoked attack on festival goers and then tried to cover up their crime.

Evans, who will be sentenced today, was found guilty of assaulting Ben Swarbrick after the jury took seven days - deliberating for nearly 37 hours - to reach their verdicts.

Six other officers from Stoke Newington were all cleared of various charges they faced after the festival. Evans was also cleared of other charges of alleged assault and false imprisonment. All seven officers were cleared of plotting to pervert the course of justice by writing false accounts of what had occurred.

Evans will almost certainly be thrown out of the Metropolitan Police following his conviction, and lose his pension. The acquitted officers will remain suspended until it is decided whether there are any outstanding disciplinary matters against them.

— Jason Bennett

— Crime Correspondent

schools

WHAT
THE ROYAL
S

EUROPE: A FORCE FOR FAIRNESS, EQUALITY AND OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN

The European Union has been a major force in helping women achieve the aims of greater equality and increased opportunity.

The Treaty of Rome, which Britain signed when we joined the European Union, established women's rights to:

- Equal pay for equal work
- Equal treatment at work including access to promotion, training, and working conditions
- Maternity leave and entitlements

Membership of the EU has also created job opportunities for British women. Programmes such as the New Opportunities for Women scheme aim to bring more women into the workplace. The EU has pledged to increase the number of women involved in public decision-making and in senior positions elsewhere. More and more women throughout the UK are using EU advice and funding to set up their own training schemes and networks.

The more that British women are aware of the advantages of EU membership, the more they will be able to benefit from them. We applaud the efforts of the current Europe 97 campaign to make this information known.

Lesley Abdella Dr Winifred Ewing MEP
Candy Atherton MP Lorna Fitzsimons MP
Jackie Balland MP Barbara Follett MP
Anne Begg MP Frances Fyfield
Tricia Birchley Julia Gash
Hazel Blears MP Sally Greengross
Lady Diana Butta CBE Zerbanoo Gifford
Joy Bryer Lili Golding MP
Christine Butler MP Pauline Green MEP
Dame Fiona Calderon Jane Griffiths MP
Anne Campbell MP Helen Grindrod QC
Prof Catharine Cape Veronica Hardstaff MEP
Bettina Carr-Allison Sylvia Heal MP
Margaret Cazalé Patricia Hewitt MP
Judith Church MP Margaret Hodge MP
Linda Clark QC MP Barbara Hosking OBE
Ann Clwyd MP Beverley Hughes MP
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Margaret Ewing MP Oona King MP

Glenys Kinnock MEP Jackie Lawrence MP
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Eryl McNally MEP Rachel Squire MP
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Schools that have beat the system to make their mark

HOW THE BEST AND WORST COMPARE

Top 10 schools with the greatest sustained improvement (based on GCSE results between 1994-7 and including only schools which have improved each year. Excludes schools which entered fewer than 30 pupils.)

School	% point increase in GCSE score between 1994 and 1997
Harris City Technology College, Croydon	37%
Archbishop Temple School, Lancashire	35%
Bowland County High School, Lancashire	32%
Morpeth School, Tower Hamlets	29%
Bacon's College, Southwark	29%
Northampton (GM) School for Boys, Northants	28%
Chadwell Heath School, Redbridge	27%
Ibsstock Place, Wandsworth	27%
Lordswood Girls' School, Birmingham	26%
Ribston Hall High School, Gloucestershire	26%

Top 10 non-selective state schools at GCSE

School	Proportion of pupils gaining at least five GCSEs at grade A*-C
Old Swinford Hospital, Stourbridge	98%
Watford Grammar School for Girls	93%
The Coopers' Company and Coborn School, Upminster	92%
The Hertfordshire and Essex High School, Bishop's Stortford	90%
Watford Grammar School for Boys	89%
Emmanuel City Technology College, Gateshead	89%
Coloma Convent Girls' School, Croydon	89%
St Albans Girls' School, St Albans	88%
Sexey's School, Bruton	88%
Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Penrith	87%

Bottom 10 non-selective state schools at GCSE

School	Proportion of pupils gaining at least five GCSEs at grade A*-C
The Ransgate School, Kent	1%
William Crane Comprehensive School, Nottingham	2%
Camplion Boys RC Comprehensive School, Liverpool	2%
High View School and Technology Centre, Derby	2%
Our Lady of Fatima High School, Liverpool	2%
Copperfields College, Leeds	3%
Haworth Wood Boys' Birmingham	3%
Amy Johnson School, Hull	4%
Skerton High School, Lancaster	4%
Pen Park School, Bristol	4%

Source of data: Department for Education and Employment

Educationists opposed to school league tables based on raw exam scores have hailed a league based on sustained improvement as a step in the right direction. But, ask Lucy Ward and Judith Judd, can the schools in the new table really be fairly compared?

The heads of two very different schools at the top of the new improvement league have one response in common to their sudden dose of public acclaim.

Both Lyndon Jones, principal of Harris City Technology College in Croydon, and Alasdair Macdonald, headteacher of Morpeth School, in east London, believe the table has provided well-deserved recognition for schools which have no chance of scaling the heights of the raw scores premier league, occupied by some of the country's most selective institutions.

However, while the two schools may both be making impressive headway, critics of the previous government's education policy claim they were never on the same starting line.

Harris, founded in 1990, is one of 14 CTCs – the business-sponsored brainchild of then-education secretary Kenneth Baker. With £1.25m over five years from its benefactor, the carpet king Lord Harris, the college was able to equip itself with 350 computers, a fibre optics network and – naturally – new carpeting for the former local education authority-run school whose buildings it took over.

Morpeth is housed mainly in 100-year-old red brick Victorian buildings in Bethnal Green. On its present roll, 70 per cent of pupils qualify for free school meals – three times the proportion at Harris CTC – while for some 60 per cent English is a second language.

For Harris CTC, Lyndon

Jones points out, the sustained improvement which has seen



Top marks: Year 7 pupils at the Harris CTC in Croydon, south London, the country's most improved school

Photograph: Philip Meech

the college leap to the top of the Government's new league extends even further back than the chosen start date of 1994. In its first year, fewer than 12 per cent of pupils gained at least five good GCSEs, while this year 64 per cent achieved that target.

The principal attributes the improvement to teachers' hard work and dedication, combined with the influence of the business world. Lord Harris, the first chair of governors and still a board member, helped instill techniques borrowed from the boardroom including benchmarking and target-setting.

Mr Jones, like other CTC principals, gives short shrift to suggestions that the college's selection policy could have influ-

enced its impressive results record. Harris CTC selects a representative cross-section of abilities, but after that it sticks to its motto – "All can achieve".

In Bethnal Green, meanwhile, Morpeth school can safely guarantee its long climb to fourth in the improvement league has been achieved with no change in intake. The 40 per cent of pupils who gained five or more good GCSEs this summer were from a year group with an even lower ability profile than normal for the school.

The secret of success, says Alasdair Macdonald, was a reversal of the "anti-boffin culture" which prevented brighter pupils from being seen to work hard. Homework clubs and hol-

iday revision courses helped instill an ethos of hard work, and improved results followed.

The school may be a model in the Government's eyes but its head will not accept the New Labour view that poverty is an excuse for failure. "It is not an excuse but to say it has no impact is unfair and unjust," Mr Macdonald said.

Professor Peter Mortimore, director of London University's Institute of Education, agreed.

"I have grave reservations about the use of crude league tables. Any exam table which doesn't reflect the different backgrounds and abilities of pupils coming into the school can't really be used to judge the quality of teaching."

Top five comprehensives at A-level

School	Average A-level points score (for pupils taking two or more A-levels; A-grade scores 10 points, E scores two)
Lady Manners School, Bakewell	24.8%
King Egbert School, Sheffield	24.6%
Ateler School, Stoke-on-Trent	24.2%
The Coopers' Company and Coborn (GM) School, Upminster	24.2%
Lady Lumley's School, Pickering	24.0%
Thomas Alleyne's High School, Urmston	24.0%

Top five independent schools at A-level

School	Average A-level points score (for pupils taking two or more A-levels; A-grade scores 10 points, E scores two)
King Edward's School, Birmingham	36.9%
Withington Girls' School, Manchester	36.8%
King Edward VI High School for Girls	35.8%
The Lady Eleanor Holles School, Hampton	35.3%
St Swithun's School, Winchester	34.7%



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No guarantees as Ulster pushes on the door of peace

Is the IRA falling apart? Will the Belfast political talks make headway? Our Ireland correspondent forecasts an eventful road ahead for the Northern Ireland peace process.

One wise old political bird, asked recently if he thought the peace process would work, smiled and said: "We should know within ten years." He was, he explained, not being facetious, but simply reflecting the fact that a return to violence will remain a possibility for many years to come.

The benign scenario for both the British and Irish governments is that the republican movement and the Ulster Unionist party remain intact and that, hopefully by next year, both may find it possible to subscribe to a new deal.

This could open the door to a new era in which both sides would feel able to subscribe to agreed new institutions. Yet even such a historic breakthrough would not guarantee peace, for there will always be the potential

as a partitionist arrangement is a problem for the future. For the moment, however, the IRA and Sinn Fein are engaged in a propaganda battle with the five dissenters about the extent of divisions.

The dissenters are not doing well. They were resoundingly voted down at an important IRA meeting; they seem disorganized; and they lack a single charismatic leader. They have also gone public with their criticisms, which does not go down well within the republican *omerta* culture; and they have wildly exaggerated their support, with the result that any future claims from them will be received with great scepticism.

They also face a republican leadership which has for more than two decades shown consummate infighting and manoeuvring skills within republicanism. But perhaps most tellingly of all they have not voiced an alternative to the Adams strategy: a simple cry of "back to the war" would find few takers.

Observers at all points of the political compass are watching for signs of further republican fissures, which cannot be ruled out. But as of now the odds are stacked against the dissenters.

While all this has been going on outside the talks, precious little has been moving within Stormont. The two governments and most of the parties have been in the same building but there has been, by all accounts, little or no meeting of minds.

While the Ulster Unionists have often been in the same room as Sinn Fein, they resolutely refuse to have any direct contact or dealing with the republicans. For many weeks now the parties have been setting out their positions in a generalised way. "We've just been surfing the agenda," as one delegate put it.

Many of the other parties criticise the Ulster Unionists for allegedly not taking the talks seriously enough. David Trimble rarely appears, they complain, UUP documents are so terse as to be almost contemptuous, and party representatives are said to be at times churlish and rude.

Part of the explanation for this may lie in the fact that Unionists have already experienced the type of split which the republicans are now trying to cope with. Mr Paisley and an ally, Robert McCartney, are campaigning for a complete Unionist withdrawal from the Assembly.

On the republican side, however, those loyal to Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams are – so far at least – successfully holding the line against their internal dissidents. In the past few weeks they have lost up to a dozen Sinn Fein members in Co Louth in the Irish Republic, as well as five of the 13 members of the IRA executive, which is a sort of advisory board made up of distinguished IRA greybeards.

There is a high degree of internal confidence in the Adams leadership. But below this there are undercurrents of worry about an arrangement which would leave the border intact and the British still in Ireland. Republicans also grumble about what they characterise as lack of movement on issues such as prisoners.

Selling what the hardliners will denounce

for an unravelling of the process, beginning on either the republican or loyalist sides.

Still less are any guarantees available at the moment. No one can be sure that the republican movement will first of all stay in one piece, and then go on to accept a political settlement which will undoubtedly leave a border in Ireland.

Similarly no one can be confident that a deal palatable to republicans will also be acceptable to David Trimble's Ulster Unionists, subject as they are to constant flank attacks from the eternally dissident and dissonant Rev Ian Paisley.

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Selling what the hardliners will denounce



Strike-force: The Cambridge United footballer Matt Joseph with Tony Banks, the sports minister, at the launch yesterday of the 'Show Racism the Red Card' campaign. Photograph: Brian Harris

BY DAVID
MCKITTRICK

Labour wants funding inquiry to be widened

Sir Patrick Neill's inquiry into political funding should cover commercial sponsorship of party events, Labour said last night, after MPs complained of firms "trying to buy favours" without actually giving cash.

Fran Abrams looks at the growing list of firms prepared to hand out canapés to politicians.

On the Sunday morning Labour's annual conference, delegates were treated to a free breakfast at one of Brighton's Grand Hotel. Gordon Brown provided the words of welcome and an arms manufacturer provided the croissants.

The Welfare-to-Work breakfast, paid for by British Aerospace, was just one of a growing number of party events with the mark of a commercial organi-

sation on them. Everything from wallets containing conference agendas to stairs in the conference centre can attract sponsorship.

Paul Flynn, Labour MP for Newport West, complained about the phenomenon at a Parliamentary Labour Party meeting last week. He has called for a full review of links with private companies.

Granny Farms Incorporated and Crad Swallowers PLC have not suddenly been converted to the merits of fair pensions or the minimum wage," he said yesterday. "They are financing the Labour Party in order to buy favours from Government." Despite raising the issue before, he had received little encouragement from party officials.

In answer to a letter from Mr Flynn the party's finance director, Paul Blagbrough, insisted that the sponsorship arrangements were based on advice from Sir Gordon Downey, Parliamentary Commissioner

for Standards. They did not give "preferred access" to ministers and there was no need for a review, he said.

Last night, though, the party said it needed sponsorship should be included in Sir Patrick's inquiry. "We feel it's an area that will have to be looked at," a spokeswoman said. "We will make our contribution to the inquiry and await guidance from it when he concludes."

At this year's conference, long-term sponsors were joined by newer names. The Co-operative Wholesale Society, a traditional backer, paid £14,000 for plastic document wallets with its name on and a leaflet inside about its activities. Granada Television, which visits all the conferences, hosted a reception for North-west delegates and was delighted to win a few warm words from Tony Blair.

Other backers provoked more disquiet, though. Some delegates complained about the link-up with British Aero-

space, which sells Hawk jets to Indonesia. Last year there was similar comment after another arm manufacturer, Racal Electronics, bought space on each step of the conference centre staircase.

British Gas bought a table at a fund-raising dinner last year and visits all the conferences, while Mirror Group Newspapers, part owner of *The Independent*, regularly pays for a disco at Labour's gathering. A drugs company, Novartis, recently paid for an induction conference for new Labour MPs.

Others that have paid for drinks and canapés include Eastern Group, an electricity company, and the North and Mid Cheshire Training and Enterprise Council. Chris Blythe, chief executive of the council, which spent £4,500 on spon-

soring a regional delegates' event in Brighton, said he felt the money was well spent.

Last night the row over tobacco sponsorship of Formula One rumbled on as it was announced that the Public Health Minister, Tessa Jowell, would be called to explain the sport's exemption from a proposed ban on a Commons committee on European legislation.

Representatives of darts and other sports affected by tobacco sponsorship are to meet the Prime Minister after a promise by Peter Mandelson to the Tories' industry spokesman, John Redwood, in a television interview on Sunday. Darts representatives say that like Formula One their sport holds global events in Britain and is entirely dependent on tobacco sponsorship.

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Redwood takes up arms for coal

The beleaguered coal industry was yesterday championed by John Redwood, the Tory trade and industry spokesman. Anthony Bevins, Political Editor, reports on an alleged dash for gas.

A suggestion that BP "jumped the queue" with its bid to open a gas-fired power station at Saltend, near Hull, was pursued in a series of Commons questions tabled by John Redwood yesterday.

The Conservative trade and industry spokesman's interest in BP's activities was sharpened by his summer campaign to get Lord Simon, former chairman of BP and now a trade and industry minister, to divest himself of his BP shareholding.

In Commons questions yesterday, he picked up a suggestion made by RJB Mining, the coal group, that BP had seemed to jump a queue of 27 applicants waiting to build power stations.

RJB objected to the BP proposal because coal-fired stations require about 3-4 million tons a year of coal for each

1,000MW of electricity generated, and it naturally opposes the gas-fired option. But the most remarkable element of a statement issued by Mr Redwood yesterday was the fact that a Thatcherite Conservative frontbencher was lobbying a Labour government on behalf of the coal industry.

Mr Redwood said the Government had come to power on promises to help the coal industry and to promote environmental green policies. "Now it is finding it difficult to do both at the same time," he said.

"I want to know why it has licensed BP to build a 1,200MW gas station. Why BP, and not some of the other 27 applicants that are sitting on ministers' desks? Is the Government worried that permission for this station could close another coal mine when it comes on stream, displacing coal-fired power?

How many more stations will it license in the dash for gas?"

Mr Redwood, who has become the most aggressive member of William Hague's opposition team, also asked why Tony Blair was not meeting representatives of the mining unions and mining company management – as he had met Formula One motor racing bosses.

The decision to appoint new teams underlines Government dismay at the continued rise in the waiting list figures. Mr Dobson blamed the Tory legacy in August when the numbers waiting for hospital treatment hit a record 1.1 million, but his tone will change today to express hope that the NHS might have turned the corner.

He will announce that the latest quarterly figures

show the rise is continuing but it is beginning to slow. The appointment of the troubleshooters is intended to accelerate the turn-around, but it also highlights the deep concern in the Government to meet the pledge to reduce waiting lists, one of Labour's five key election promises.

The total number of patients waiting for surgery rose by 3 per cent to an all-time high of 1,192,700 for the quarter to August. Today's announcement will show that the rise has slowed to around 2 per cent in the quarter from July to the end of September.

Mr Dobson yesterday compared the waiting lists to a superanker. He told MPs they would take a long time to slow and turn-around.

The Government came under fire from Simon Hughes, the Liberal Democrat spokesman on health, for failing to put more money into the NHS. "They will try to manage the waiting lists to pretend they have not gone up as much as they have been. That is because of the summer," he said.

Mr Dobson was praised by Labour MPs for pumping an extra £269m into the NHS from the defence budget to help hospitals avoid a crisis this winter, but ministers fear cold weather will see another sharp rise in waiting lists.

Such an increase could lead to renewed calls for rationing of care on the NHS, with some treatments being dropped from cover.

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Britain and US fear Saddam will be let off the hook

The United States and Iraq both appeared keen yesterday to step back from the belligerent rhetoric of recent days. But Steve Fitchett says Washington and London are still determined not to be seen as "going soft" on Saddam Hussein.

Britain rebuffed an attempted Iraqi compromise whereby some US weapons inspectors would be allowed back as part of a United Nations team. But the Foreign Office also spoke of "actively pursuing a diplomatic solution". British officials argued that

the proposals by Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi Foreign Minister, "indicate an Iraqi willingness to move". Reassuring words are intended to persuade Iraq that sanctions will not stay in place for ever. There can, in other words, be "light at the end of the tunnel", despite Iraq's repeatedly expressed fears to the contrary. British officials talked of drawing "a road map with greater clarity" on how to get the sanctions lifted.

Part of the new-road map might be what US officials called "modest adjustments" to the oil-for-food programme. Under the current terms of the programme, Iraq can sell \$2bn (£1.25bn) of oil every six months, with the proceeds controlled by the UN.

Iraq has said that Americans can come back in if there are an equal number of inspectors from other permanent members of the Security Council - Britain, France, Russia, and China. But British officials warned yesterday that President Saddam cannot be allowed to "discriminate" regarding the make-up of a UN team. They said there must be a willingness to comply with UN resolutions, particularly readiness to open up all weapons facilities for inspection in order to prevent the possession of weapons of mass destruction.

Foreign Office minister Derek Fitchett, on a visit to Tokyo, argued: "I think that Saddam Hussein realises that he's gone a

step too far and made a tactical mistake and is looking for a way that he can back down and save his face." The French President, Jacques Chirac, congratulated himself on the easing of the crisis: "I have a feeling that the points I made have contributed towards what has developed today, towards some form of détente," he said.

Oil prices fell yesterday, on the perception that the crisis has begun to ease. The French Foreign Minister, Hubert Vedrine, said military action "remains possible but is not certain". He said he was convinced the US seeks a diplomatic solution, "because the situation would perhaps not be fundamentally" changed by

military action". Arab leaders have shown little enthusiasm for the prospect of military action against Iraq.

Britain has been the only country to have backed Washington almost to the hilt, in its desire to punish Saddam, come what may. British officials continued to emphasise that an iron fist was still contained within the softer new glove. The emphasis was still on "readiness to consider use of force if all other measures fail".

Britain and the US have been keen to argue that all sides are acting in unison against President Saddam. In reality, military action would put intolerable pressure on the anti-Saddam alliance. Criticism

from France and Russia is now more muted only because both now believe military action is an unlikely option.

In Baghdad, President Saddam held a meeting with members of the Revolutionary Command Council to discuss the stand-off. According to the official Iraqi news agency, "the political situation was discussed and the letters sent to the President from his brethren Arab presidents and monarchs were reviewed." Russia's Foreign Minister, Yevgeny Primakov, talked of Russia being "active in many different areas". He emphasised: "We will do everything to find an exit to this crisis through the path of peaceful political settlement."

Nigeria's leader promises amnesty

Nigeria's military ruler dissolved his cabinet yesterday and said he was granting an amnesty for some political prisoners in a speech to mark the fourth anniversary of his seizure of power.

General Sani Abacha, speaking in a radio and television address, said his government had decided to free "those detained persons whose release would constitute no further impediment to the peace and security of the country".

Gen Abacha, whose government has been accused of holding hundreds of political prisoners, did not say which detainees, or how many, would be freed. He did not mention Nigeria's best-known prisoner, the businessman Moshood Abiola, who was the presumed winner of the aborted elections in 1993.

Gen Abacha also said he was dissolving his cabinet, noting that a number of officials had indicated that they wanted to play larger roles in Nigeria's political transition. Saying Nigeria was about to "embark on the final lap of the tenure of this administration", Gen Abacha said his move followed indications from ministers that they wanted to "fully participate in the political process".

He has promised to hold elections next year, handing power to a civilian government on 1 October. Pro-democracy groups, however, say he will probably orchestrate the election to ensure that he remains in power indefinitely.

The general also used his speech to attack Nigeria's independent media, which has faced repeated arrests and crackdowns, as well as to round on foreign critics of his regime.

— AP, Abuja



Hot work: Rescue worker Andy Darbyshire trying to keep a killer whale cool on a beach near Exmouth, Western Australia. Seven of the animals were stranded on the beach on Sunday. Three have been refloated but three have died, including this female's calf. — Photograph: AP/Michael O'Brien

The Big Crocodile bites back at apartheid inquiry

Despite months of behind-the-scenes wooing, South Africa's former president, PW Botha, has said he intends to ignore a subpoena to appear before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the body charged with exposing the truth about the country's apartheid past.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu yesterday said that if Mr Botha, 81, former leader of the National Party, refused to attend a hearing on the workings of the old State Security Council, he would be prosecuted. The commission is trying to establish how the council, which Mr Botha chaired, fitted into the chain of command that allowed atrocities to take place. Those who ignore the TRC's bidding face a fine, or two years in jail.

In an interview with the Afrikaans newspaper *Rapport*, Mr Botha called the TRC a "circus". The Archbishop said he was sad Mr Botha appeared to have thrown down a gauntlet. He has visited Mr Botha at his retirement home to persuade him to co-operate with the Commission in the interests of reconciliation.

The TRC submitted questions for written reply, but Mr Botha missed the deadline. The commission offered to take the hearing to him after claims that he was too ill to travel to Johannesburg. "In showing this consideration for Mr Botha we have angered many South Africans who have accused us of being spineless for not unceremoniously calling him to account," Archbishop Tutu said.



Botha: Told commission to keep away from his home

Winnie comes out fighting in campaign for ANC power

Undaunted by accusations of murder, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela began her campaign for the deputy leadership of the ANC yesterday with a rare media interview in which she criticised her former husband's government for failing to deliver to the masses.

Mrs Mandela, who is standing for office in defiance of the ANC leadership, was interviewed in her mansion in Soweto. She was in rip-roaring form, attacking claims that she murdered the 14-year-old activist Stompie Seipei Mockett in her garden in the late 1980s.

She called Katia Ceheku, the former bodyguard who recently claimed he saw her stab Stompie, a "liar and a lunatic". She dismissed Mr Ceheku's patron, the former British MP Baroness Nicholson, as a "mad cow". She cast aspersions on President Mandela for even looking at Mr Ceheku's allegations.

Mrs Mandela says there is conspiracy against her by those who dislike her preaching the "truth", which was that the ANC's "high-handed" leadership had failed the people. A "Winniephobia" campaign, she says, had been whipped up since she was nominated for the deputy post.

Mrs Mandela's bid for the deputy leadership, which would put her within striking distance of the presidency, has alarmed ANC leaders. All other candidates for the deputy's post have been forced to step aside in favour of Jacob Zuma, an



Winnie Mandela: says she is victim of a conspiracy

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Japan to welcome Blair the good European

Tony Blair will visit Japan in January, Derek Fitchett, British Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, announced in Tokyo yesterday.

Since Labour came to power last May, seven British ministers have travelled to Tokyo, a sign, Mr Fitchett said, of the importance London attached to relations with

Japan. While there had been no fundamental change in ties with Tokyo since Labour came to power, he believed Japanese officials felt more comfortable with Mr Blair's administration because it was more pro-Europe than the Conservative government of John Major, who visited Japan in 1993.

"If there is a difference [compared to the Major government] here in Japan it is that Labour is seen as extremely positive on Europe," Mr Fitchett said. The date of Mr Blair's trip has not been decided.

Britain has long been the top base in Europe for Japanese companies with interests there.

— Reuters, Tokyo

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10/YOUNG BRITAIN

The future: focused, flexible and female

BY NICOLE VEASH AND
JACK O'SULLIVAN

In a world of insecure jobs, young women are infinitely better prepared. While young men are still hoping to be footballers, women are busy planning their lives from school to work, acquiring that all-important work experience at every opportunity.

This is the picture presented by 2020 vision, a survey by the Industrial Society of 10,000 young Britons aged between 12 and 25, the largest study of its kind. The Independent continues its exclusive look at the study every day this week.

Rebecca Jones, 22, is typical of a new breed of can-do women. "From the age of 12 I knew what I wanted to do – a classics degree. I loved Latin and I enjoyed my Greek and I focused on getting the grade to go to university.

When I left Cambridge, while I didn't know the precisely what job I wanted, I knew exactly what I wanted to get out of it. I wanted something with variety, prospects for promotion, something that was exciting, dynamic and dealt with people." Today, she works as a strategic planner in a London advertising agency.

In contrast, Paul Dunbar, a third-year economics student at Lancaster University, has not planned his life. "I'm very worried that I've done no work experience. I've never been taught



how to deal with an office for example. I never really thought about work until this term."

"Then I saw jobs being advertised and the deadlines and I thought I'd better hurry up and think of what I want to do. It is very frightening when you have 20 applications on your desk."

"A lot of guys seem to be getting a rude awakening, when they're suddenly besieged with stuff from the careers service. Women seem to focus on what they want to do for the future. Quite a few, for example, have taken a year off in industry. They certainly study harder – they're more conscientious."

Rigid, long hours are anathema to the new female generation who see such practices as blocking their progress. A third expect more flexible hours to be available within 10 years and half think there will be more working from home.

"Women," says Rebecca Jones, "are driving the way we change at work. It is all about doing what we want to do on our own terms. This is a much more progressive way of thinking and it is about flexibility in the workplace."

"If, for example, I had children and I wanted time off, I would take it and have to fit that in with my work. If I wanted to leave at five and work on my laptop I would have to do that. We do the job in the end but it doesn't have to involve taking part in the faces game, just sitting at our desks and being there to be seen."

Women also recognise even more than their male peers that the key skills in today's age of communication are literacy and "getting on with people".

"The whole communication thing," says Rebecca Jones, "is

really important, especially as this sector in the job market is expanding. Women seem to be especially good at communicating and that is why we are getting a higher profile."

And they are learning all the time – women recognise more than men that home is a place where they can learn skills, be it for running a home, maintaining a family.

Women also have a strong agenda for ensuring their own success at work. More than a third of women, compared with a fraction of men, expect more childcare in the workplace within 10 years. And they are fierce supporters of men taking up their share of childcare – 93 per cent think men and women should take equal responsibility for caring for children.

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Mina Dye Sharp: "Women are more realistic about the job market in the future. We know that we are the only ones who can make things happen. Men say the opportunities are not out there"

Photograph: Guzeljan/John Houlihan

Women have better skills for the modern world

After graduating from Bradford University, Mina Dye-Sharp, 24, became a community youth volunteer.

A lot of women realise they have got to be focused. We feel we have got to do better than men and also better than the next woman. But I don't want to get on in life just because I'm a woman. I want to succeed on merit and on my abilities.

I think we have really changed the workplace. We are better listeners than men, not so aggressive and better at seeing

things from a different perspective. Women are prepared to take everyone's feelings on board. They are more team-based and democratic.

Some men I work with have tunnel vision. They can only see things one way. They seem to find it hard to compromise and their communication is quite poor, which can sometimes be frustrating.

Women are more persistent. Men just seem to give up when problems arise or they just delegate downwards. Negotiation is really important at work.

Compromising is not about giving up. You can still stand

by what you believe in. Work is all about give and take.

Blokes are generally more competitive than women, which can be a good thing, but we get emotionally involved with what we are doing.

Women are more realistic about the job market in the future. We know that we are the only ones who can make things happen.

Men just say the opportunities are not out there. I think the problem is that young men don't have a traditional role and that is why women appear to be so much more focused.

Men need to realise they have an important part to play in society. I've got a lot of single mothers as friends who are all going back to higher education.

They feel they have missed out and that is the only way for them to get off income support.

They need to help themselves and they are very focused on that.

It's no longer important to marry or settle down and have a child. If a man doesn't stick around after a baby is born, women aren't that bothered any more. We can cope without a man around and it's less hassle.

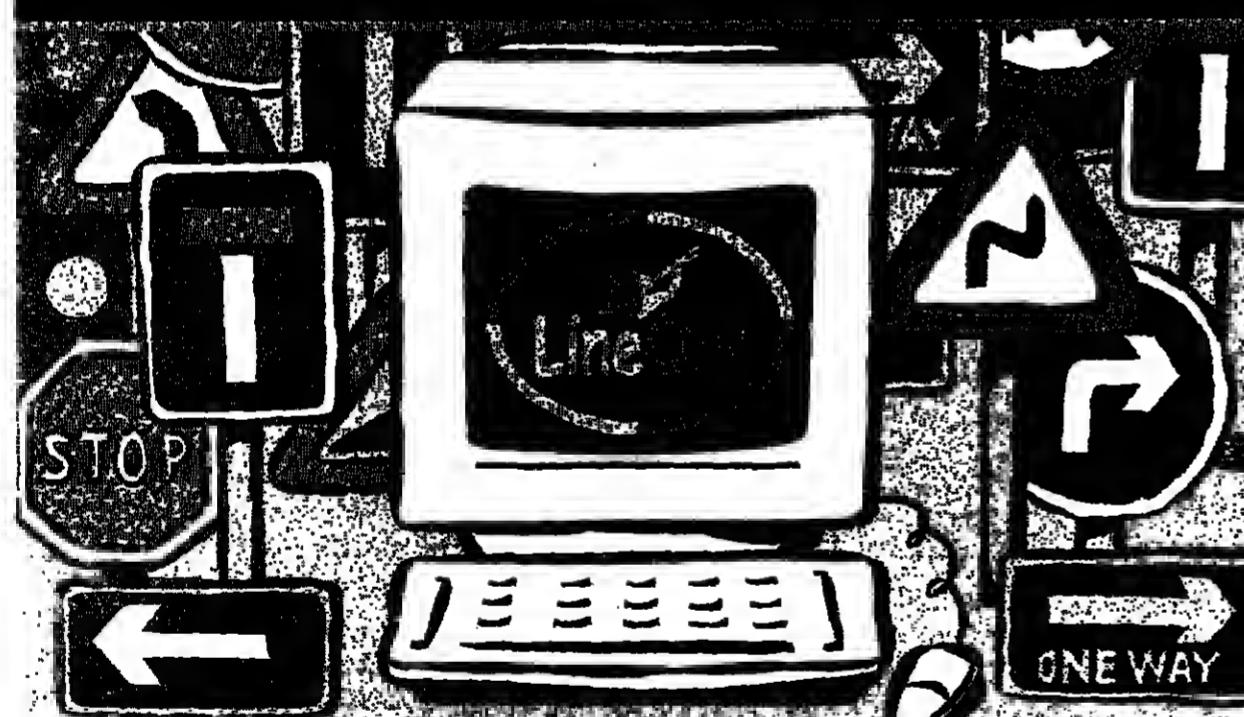
There is onus on young women to succeed and do more. Even that girl-power



thing is like peer pressure. The media is telling women that they have got to go further and do better, so in the end being a career-oriented woman could be like conforming to a modern stereotype.

2020 Vision is co-ordinated by the Industrial Society. The Action Agenda along with full results of the research will be launched next Monday.

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It's what you want to know

We're fed up with meaningless sex by the time we're in our twenties

"My friend's got three kids and he's got another on the way," says 19-year-old Damian. "But since he turned 17, he's settled down with his girlfriend. I suppose that's what we all want to do these days."

Damian Julianne, from Birkhead, has grown up with sex. He had his first full sexual encounter at 10 with a 14-year-old girl from down the street.

"Yes, I was really young, but it wasn't like sex, like I have to do it, it was more of an investigation and if I look back it seems laughable," he says.

"When I turned 15, sex became like a regular, more serious thing. But last year I met a girl and fell in love and it totally changed the way I feel about relationships."

Although things did not work out for Damian and he has steered clear of other commitment since, he admits that somewhere along the line he wants to shake off any fad-like connotations.

"I might have had a lot of girlfriends in the past, but I would love to settle down. Maybe not to get married, but just to be in a long-term relationship with someone I was committed to."

Damian is not alone among young Britons.

A picture emerges from the 2020 Vision research of a generation of young people who are knowledgeable about sex from an early age, but who at the same time take a rather traditional view on intimacies by the time they reach their late teens and early twenties.

Jo Gardiner, campaign director for the Industrial Society,

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Forward planning – the girlie key to success

Sarah Cox, 22, from Bolton, presented Channel Four's 'The Girlie Show' and is now the face of Vladivar Vodka.

"It's important to think ahead about the future. I've modelled in Manchester, New York and Milan and I'm having a brilliant time drinking vodka and being paid loads for doing it. But I'm under no illusions that I'm still going to be a celebrity when I'm in my dotage like Cilla. So I'm looking to have my own show soon, where I'm chatting to people."

"I'm pretty independent, living on my own in north-west London. It's important for me to be a strong woman."

"Young women like me feel we have every right to have sex with as many partners as men

and be just as demanding in the bedroom. But I don't play in the rain without a macintosh – it's got to be safe and fun. I'd prefer to be with one person. I like getting to know people really well. You get more out of the sex. I'm not one to cop off behind the local kebab canteen with any Tom, Dick or Harry."

"I started out in radio when I was 12. I sort of just fell into it. It was a stroke of luck really and once I got into the whole radio thing I just stuck with it."

"My female friends are a lot more organised about their careers. By the time they reach their late teens they knew exactly what they wanted and where they were going."

"They have always been much more focused on everything they do in comparison to blokes. Deep down, guys know what they want but they don't show it. Their careers tend to be a lot more 'let's see how it goes', while women show their feelings a lot more which helps them articulate what they want."

Robin Banks, 25, is a lunchtime DJ on Virgin FM.

"I heard this joke the other day which really summed it all up. When a woman wakes up in the morning she jumps out of bed and says I must get dressed. I must go to toilet. I must do this and do that. While a bloke will lie in bed for ten minutes saying 'come on thought, come on brain ... ah yes, food'."



TOMORROW: Young Britons – they're obsessed with education

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days. We know everything when we are still in the playground. But it doesn't matter how liberal you are because by the time we are in our twenties we are fed up with meaningless sex."

Young people are more open to sex than any generation before them and they tend to use that freedom in a responsible manner.

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"We might know a lot about sex, but most of my friends don't sleep around. Partly this is due to the AIDS risk and partly it is because we are told about sex from such an early age. It just holds no surprises and there is so much more to gain from a long-term sexual relationship."

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The castle on steroids that glitters anew

The Royal Family will on Thursday celebrate the golden wedding of the Queen and Prince Philip in the state dining room at Windsor exactly five years after it was gutted by fire. Stephen Goodwin, Heritage Correspondent, toured the castle where glory has replaced devastation.

Gorgeous George IV would have loved the curtains. The flounce and ostentation is back in his crimson and green drawing rooms at Windsor, where the original exuberance has been restored to the valances, tassels and gilt after decades of a stricken, dowdier appearance.

"Architecture on steroids" was the apt description by Jane Brighty, a specialist in curtain decoration. It applies to all of the "semi state rooms" - these drawing rooms, the state dining room, the octagonal dining room and the China corridor - which will be open to the public for the first time after Christmas.

The huge tassel order went to Portugal, about the only craftwork done outside Britain. Silk damask cost £78,000, the curtain trimmings £36,000 and 500,000 leaves of gold were used to gild the ceilings.

St George's hall, where the

blaze raced from end to end of the 180ft roof void, will be reopened in an airy form familiar to George IV. And in an all-but-new private chapel there is stained-glass based on a sketch by Prince Philip, who had overall charge of the restoration.

On 20 November 1995 nine principal rooms and more than 100 others were damaged in a fire which lit up the Berkshire sky. It started in the private chapel where paintings were being inspected while rewiring was underway. Someone screamed "get the paintjugs out" and all but one of the works of art in the main rooms were saved.

Servants of the royal household were yesterday preening themselves on the fact that the "Windsor job" had been completed six months early and for £3m under its £40m budget.

"The restoration has been undertaken at no extra cost to the taxpayer," emphasised officials. That is not to say "at no cost".

In the face of public indignation, the Queen released the Tory government from its promise to pay for the repair and agreed to meet 70 per cent of the cost. The other 30 per cent comes from the annual government grant to the Royal Household property section.

The style of the restoration is pretty much what one might have expected from the House of Windsor. As Prince Philip pointed out, a complete re-



Downesian gothic: St George's hall, redesigned by architect Giles Downes. The low, dark wood ceiling has been replaced with one more lofty in the most ambitious piece of green oak joinery since the 16th century; craftsmen used 350 Hertfordshire oaks felled in 1995. Tracery and panelling match the roof beams

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

design was out since all the furniture, carpets and works of art had been saved. A theatrical touch has been added by an equestrian statue on the musicians' gallery of the hall. Prince Philip wanted "something dramatic". The horse has an undistinguished pedigree - about 50

years old and made of plaster

- but the armour was once worn by Sir Christopher Hatton, Queen Elizabeth I's champion.

• *Windsor Restored*: ITV; 10.40pm Thursday 20 November; *Restoration, The Rebuilding of Windsor Castle*; Adam Nicollson; Michael Joseph; £20.

Lottery handouts for arts shrink

The curtain came down on huge lottery handouts for the arts in England yesterday when the Arts Council declared a £15m ceiling on individual grants for the next eight years. The Government's introduction of a "sixth good cause" - youth and training - cut its cash from £250m a year to £200m.

The Arts Council of England said it would be more "strategic" in targeting lottery funding in future, balancing regional and national needs.

Of the £1bn in capital grants over the next eight years, £200m has been earmarked for projects over £15m - and will barely cover schemes already in the pipeline. The South Bank Centre in London, the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon, Bristol's Harbourside Centre and Gateshead's Regional Music Centre are likely to account for that cash, if their bids are successful.

Jeremy Newton, the Arts Council's National Lottery director, said: "There simply is not enough money to meet demand."

Wildlife charter

Twenty-two of Britain's nature organisations yesterday called for new wildlife legislation to save precious species and habitats which are being lost.

The Wildlife Trusts, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Friends of the Earth and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) were among those who called on the Government to live up to its election manifesto commitment for tougher action.

They published a wildlife charter to show what should be done, including legal muscle to protect sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs), hundreds of which are damaged every year. It wants lists of protected species to be updated to include creatures such as the water vole, the fastest-declining native mammal, and calls for the introduction of special areas for important marine wildlife, which currently receives hardly any protection at all.

— Louise Jury

BA's new airline takes on no-frills operators

British Airways announced yesterday it will launch a low cost airline to compete with no-frills carriers. Randeep Ramesh, Transport Correspondent, examines BA's newest addition to its fleet.

BA's plans, revealed exclusively by the Independent on Sunday last month, will see the new operator, codenamed Operation Blue Sky, from Luton Stansted.

BA has been squeezed by smaller operators - which have been able to offer cheaper fares by flying from less expensive, less congested airports and cutting out extras such as meals.

Their success has been remarkable.

Ryanair, which also operates from Stansted, earlier this month announced a rise in half-year profits from £9.4m to £17.3m. In just 24 months, Easyjet - which runs flights from Luton - has taken 32 per cent of the market on the London to Nice route.

The upstarts are nervous that BA's plans are nothing but a front to run them out of town. Tony Anderson, Easyjet's marketing director, said: "They must be able to prove they're doing it to make money, not just to drive us out of business." Easy-

jet and Debonair Airways are both considering legal action.

The new company, which will be wholly-owned by BA, will have its own name, identity, management and employees. It will not use travel agents. Passengers will book by credit card on the telephone, and can expect a "frugal flier" service, with no meal and perhaps one complimentary drink.

BA are coy about the details. Barbara Cassani, formerly in charge of the airline's US operations and in charge of the new carrier, will only say that fares will be "competitive" and that the new airline will fly to cities in Italy, Spain, Scandinavia, France and Germany by the end of the first year. More than 150 new jobs are expected to be created when the aircraft launches "early next year".

Mrs Cassani will compete not only with low cost rivals - but with traditional BA flights from Heathrow and Gatwick. "This has to be a stand alone company that makes money," said Mrs Cassani. Initially, the new airline will lease eight 737 aircraft - which each carry about 130 passengers - and will fly three times a day to European destinations. "We have very clear financial targets," said Mrs Cassani. "I have to break even and move into profit by 2001."

THE FIRST LADY OF FLIGHT



Britain's new first lady of flight is appropriately American. Barbara Cassani, 37, (left) was hand-picked by Bob Ayling, BA's global chief executive, to run the flag carrier's new low-cost carrier.

Plucked from New York, the airline executive is as feminine as she is feisty. She charms reporters in conversation as quickly as she puts them down. A mother of two - who is married to an English investment banker - she eschews the antics of her better known rivals at Virgin. "I won't be jumping out of a cake at the launch party," she dryly remarks.

Little more could be expected of someone who after Princeton, worked as management consultant at Coopers and Lybrand and started with BA soon after it was privatised in 1987.

Big things are expected of Mrs Cassani. With BA lacking any director with any real stage presence, this high-profile job could prove her ticket to the top.

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12/WAR CRIMINALS

World's policemen let Bosnia's worst killers walk free

The map on this page, published today by the Independent monitoring group Human Rights Watch, graphically illustrates the West's failure in Bosnia. Nato knows the location of over 40 men wanted on war crimes charges, but the S-For peacekeepers have attempted just two arrests since the end of the war. Andrew Gumbel reports on the West's unfinished business in the Balkans.

In the swirling cauldron of rumours, conspiracy theories, whispers and lies that bubble away in Bosnia, no hot tip has surfaced so frequently, or so insistently, as the story of Radovan Karadzic's imminent arrest. Back in July, it was said the former Bosnian Serb president was so scared of being betrayed that he had replaced his entire 50-strong personal bodyguard.

In August, word spread that a commando unit had actually set up a raid on his headquarters in Pale, in the mountains above Sarajevo, but that something went wrong at the last moment. The rumours have intensified since. "He'll be arrested before the onset of winter," they said at one point. "Wait until the Bosnian Serb elections are out of the way, and then you'll see the international community snap into action." This is the favoured theory at the moment.

The fact is that Mr Karadzic remains at large, barred from public office but still able to manipulate his political and business interests from behind the scenes. Free, too, are many of his former associates accused of setting up concentration camps and massacring Muslim civilians in their hundreds and thousands - some of them living openly in eastern Bosnia. And free, as well, are a clutch of Muslims and Bosnian Croats who appear on the indictment lists issued by the international war crimes tribunal in The Hague but whose names have



Watching brief: Will UN forces, like these French soldiers, take action?

notions of independent justice stand much chance of being understood, and any arrest is bound to be interpreted as a political act, even if it is not meant that way. The international community has responded in kind, using arrests or the threat of them as a means to achieving progress on other fronts, such as media freedom or dialogue between the former warring factions.

The problem with such an approach is that it confirms the suspicion of Bosnian Serb nationalists that the Hague tribunal is an international conspiracy. And it also risks deferring arrests almost indefinitely. In July, S-For arrested one suspect and killed another in the northern town of Prijedor, but nothing similar has materialised since. According to some sources, Mr Karadzic's arrest was deferred during the summer because of the impending local elections. Then the moment of truth was put off again while international negotiators installed a multi-ethnic council in the disputed town of Brcko. This weekend's Bosnia Serb parliamentary elections and next month's presidential poll may prove to be further excuses.

All this might be fine if arresting war criminals was merely a matter of honour, but there are stronger reasons to act quickly. Many of the worst Bosnian Serb offenders are part of a huge smuggling and extortion racket run by Mr Karadzic and his associates. Prospects for injecting a modicum of democratic pluralism into Serb-held Bosnia depend in part on dismantling this structure and rounding up the ring-leaders.

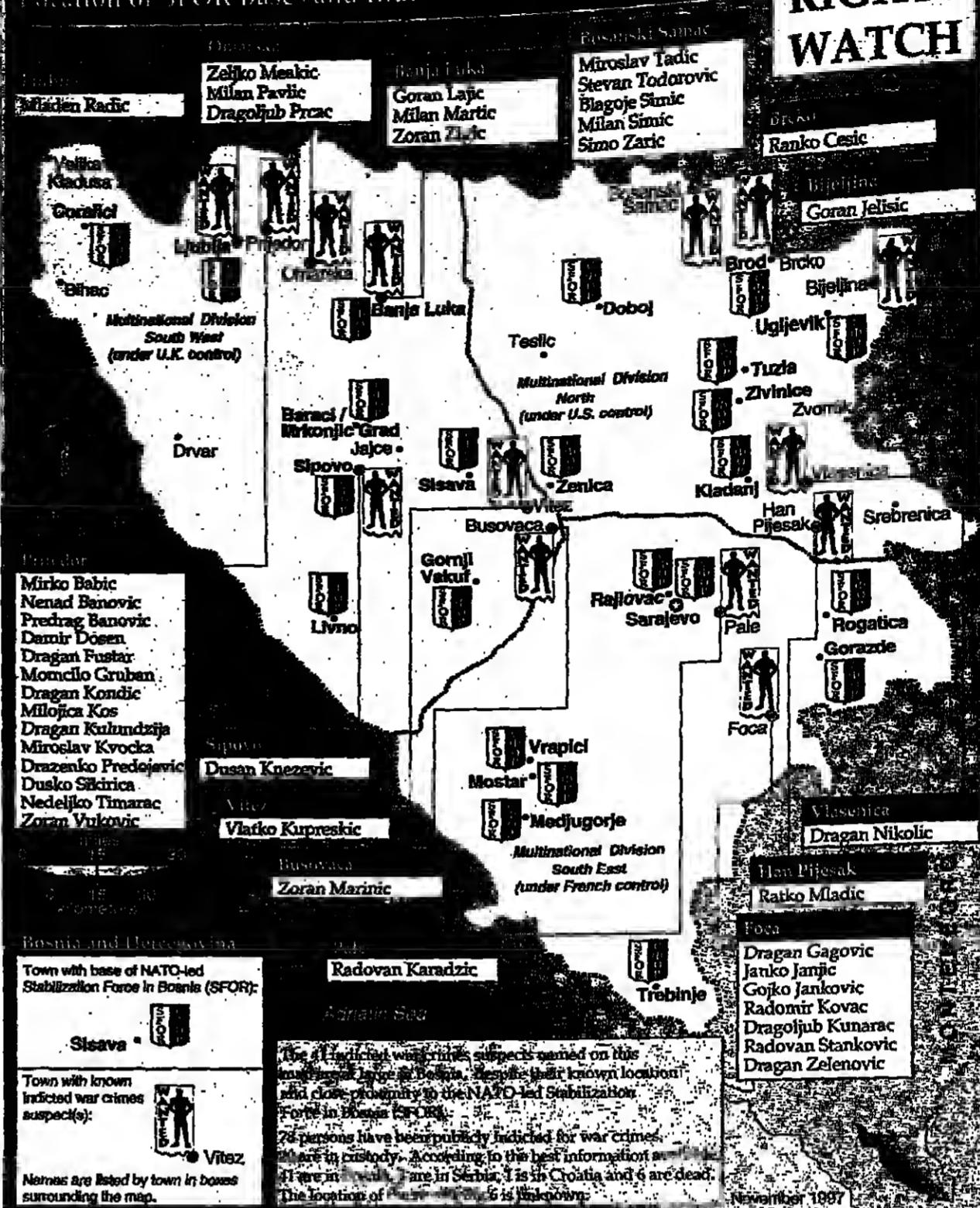
All sides in Bosnia need to face up to the horror of what happened if they are to soften the nationalist policies which created the conflict in the first place. And there has been progress recently, in spite of S-For's inaction. Some Serb and Croat militia members have recently confessed to horrifying crimes and willingly given themselves up to local courts. And an independent magazine in Sarajevo, *Dani*, has published detailed reports of murders carried out by Muslim militias against Serb civilians.

elicited little interest from the international community or the Western media.

What the Human Rights Watch map illustrates is that many of the suspects live within a stone's throw of S-For bases. True, S-For's mandate insists that indictees should be arrested only if encountered in the course of normal duties, but testimony from several different sources suggests such encounters are frequent and even, on occasion, downright chummy. "The map shows that Nato's failure to arrest has nothing to do with its inability to locate indicted persons," said Human Rights Watch spokeswoman Holly Cartner. "It's a grievous failure of political will."

Western officials on the ground argue privately that the issue is more complicated than neglect or lack of nerve. Bosnia, they say, is not a country where Western

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA Location of SFOR Bases and Indicted War Crimes Suspects



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TRIBUNAL READY TO ACT

THE HAGUE: The United Nations war crimes tribunal for former Yugoslavia, created four years ago, is at last fully operational and able to concentrate on prosecutions, the outgoing president Antonio Cassese said yesterday. Addressing international digni-

VUKOVAR ON ALERT AFTER BLASTS

ZAGREB: Police in the eastern Croatian town of Vukovar, which fell to Serb forces six years ago, have increased security following two bombings and other incidents at the weekend, a UN spokesman said. The bombings, at a school and a municipal building, caused damage

but no casualties. After Croatia's secession from Yugoslavia, local Serbs backed by the Yugoslav People's Army took the town on 18 November 1991. The surrounding area has been administered by the UN since January 1996 but is due to be reintegrated into Croatia next year.

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Preservation – and self-preservation – is the order of the day for Yvonne Trchalik and other enthusiastic members of the Green Gym

Photograph: John Lawrence

Why go down to the gym today, when you could go down to the woods?

If fitness is the prescription, there are better, more beautiful, greener ways of achieving it than in a mechanical gym. An Oxfordshire doctor has come up with a whole new milieu, ideal for those who can see the wood for the trees. Caroline Green reports from outdoors.

Dr William Bird, a GP in the Snoring Common medical practice in Oxfordshire, had been wondering for some time how he could persuade more people in the village to take regular exercise. One evening, after a particularly stressful day at work, he went for a walk round the village and, as he appreciated the scenic countryside around him, he had an idea. Why not get people to use the environment as a resource for getting fit, instead of trying to force them to join gyms or take up new sports?

He duly set up a programme of organised local walks and three years on, the so-called Health Walks are so successful that eight other practices around the county are start similar schemes. Bird began to see promis-

ing results, and found he was prescribing less medication generally. Now he's about to take things a stage further. In conjunction with the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) he has set up an innovative scheme in which people will get fit by doing environmental conservation work.

The Green Gym project will involve monitoring the physical fitness of a group of volunteers as they carry out a range of BTCV-organised events such as tree planting, hedge maintenance and cleaning up rivers. Although there has been a general perception for many years that the countryside may have a therapeutic effect both mentally and physically, hard evidence to date is sketchy to say the least, particularly where there's an altruistic, volunteering element. Bird aims to get the facts on whether this form of exercise really does have beneficial effects on fitness and mental well-being.

"The philosophy behind the Health Walks and the Green Gym is that we can use the countryside as a resource for health," he says. "It's the first time anything like this has been done. Lack of exercise is our biggest epidemic in this country, but the NHS can't afford to tackle the problem on its own. We have to find a way of making physical activity at-

tractive, and it has to be cost-effective for the National Health Service."

Many surgeries around the country already have a system in place for "prescribing" physical activity under the Exercise Referral Scheme, where patients with a range of health problems, from heart disease to high blood pressure, high cholesterol to arthritis are given eight free sessions at a local gym. The surgery pays for the sessions, but they're heavily subsidised by the gyms themselves, which are relying on the fact that people may sign up at the end of the programme. But according to research commissioned by William Bird, there is a drop-out rate of up to 80 per cent with the Patient Referral Scheme. People just don't stick with it. "There are lots of reasons why it often doesn't work," he says. "It's intimidating for people who may be old and unfit to go to gym and be faced with all these gorgeous, lycra-clad bodies. They may have to travel some distance to them, and going to a gym is not a very sociable activity, which also puts people off."

By contrast, the Health Walks have had a drop-out rate of only 12 per cent and Bird is hoping that the Green Gym project will offer similar results in the long term. Dorothy Rose, an ex-nurse, found, like

a lot of retired people, that giving up work deprived her of her main source of exercise. She retired in 1986 and by 1994 she was overweight, had high blood pressure and her cholesterol levels fell into the "very high risk" category for developing heart disease. "I'd let myself go," says Dorothy, who is now 65. "It's very easy to slip into the habit of just sitting about when you stop working. I did go to a gym with my son once and it frightened me. It was full of strange equipment and no-one spoke to anyone else. I thought 'this isn't for me'."

Dorothy was involved in the walks from the beginning. She says: "Within six months, my cholesterol was down, my blood pressure had dropped, and I'd lost three stone in weight." Sixty volunteers, all unfit, will be picked by Dr Bird in January. 30 people will be involved in conservation projects, while the other half will carry on their normal inactivity and act as a control group.

At the end of six months, they will be examined and have their weight, blood pressure and cholesterol measured. They will also fill out a standard questionnaire made by psychologists to assess a subject's state of mental well-being.

At the same time, the Department of Health Care Studies at Oxford Brookes

University has been commissioned by Bird, with funding from the Countryside Commission and Shell UK, to test healthy subjects' responses to various conservation tasks.

Twenty people will be hooked up to heart monitors while they carry out a range of activities from simply identifying wild flowers to digging ponds. The idea is to get a precise picture of the musculoskeletal, calorific and metabolic demands of each task.

Using this information, the Green Gym activities can eventually be graded according to how strenuous they are, and what demands they make on the body.

Yvonne Trchalik, age 23, is the Green Gym Project Officer. She says: "I've never been into sports or going to a gym and for me, conservation work is the way I keep fit – I've been doing it since I was 13. I can feel a difference in myself when I've been on a week's conservation work: I feel fitter and stronger."

"Conservation work can be a form of aerobic exercise, because you get a bit out of breath doing it. One of the more gentle tasks is what's known as plug planting, where you plant wild flowers using a special tool. You don't even have to bend over to do that. Coppicing involves chopping down trees to promote regrowth and increase the di-

versity of species in a wood, and that's among the most strenuous activities.

"I like to work with a group of people on something like making a kissing gate (a gate now used instead of a stile) and then being able to see it in use afterwards. I'm not a very strong, burly sort of person but doing this sort of work has definitely made me stronger and fitter." It's the first time the BTCV has been involved in a health project. Trchalik says: "Research in the past has suggested a link between the environment and a feeling of well-being, but the Green Gym is the first time conservation work has been linked to health."

Because she's now fit and well, Dorothy Rose won't be involved in the research project. But once the Green Gym is up and running, other local people can get involved too and Dorothy fully intends to try her hand at a spot of digging, planting and dredging. "We do quite a bit of that kind of work anyway," she says. "As we walk around we hammer down nails on stiles and cut our own paths."

"I find it very interesting. It's beautiful to watch the changing seasons and it's like a social event as well as a way of exercising. I've discovered now that getting older doesn't necessarily mean you can't get fit."

The press likes to focus on the negative. Of the 3.7 million smears done every year, the vast majority are correctly interpreted by undervalued lab staff working their butts off.

DR PHIL HAMMOND

"Hello doctor. I've been invited for a smear."

"Have you tried the nurse?"

"Bloody typical."

"What?"

"You fanny around on the TV telling women to get informed consent before we have a smear and when I try, you tell me to go and see the nurse."

"I'm sorry. I'm having trouble reconciling my media life with my doctoring."

"My heart bleeds."

"Look, perhaps we should restart the consultation..."

"Hello doctor. I've been invited for a smear."

"I see. I expect you'll be wanting some informed consent."

"Too bloody right."

"Tell me, what do you understand about cervical screening?"

"I thought it was to stop me getting cervical cancer. But then I read this story in the *Evening Post* about a 29-year-old woman who had a negative smear, was found to have cancer three months later and died within four months."

"So a lot of women are getting treatment that may not benefit them?"

"True, but then medical science isn't yet sufficiently advanced to identify exactly who will get cancer, so you have to treat around 50 women to prevent one cancer."

"Still, that's not bad odds."

"Yes, but to find the 50 women, we have to do smears on 4,000, of which 250 will be mildly abnormal."

"But you've already said a mildly abnormal smear is nothing to worry about."

"No, I didn't. I said these changes virtually never progress to cancer."

"Same thing."

"In theory, perhaps. But some women with mild changes are convinced they've got cancer, and worry like stink about it."

"Why?"

"Partly because no one's ever sat down with them to explain that an abnormal smear does not mean cancer. And if they do, it tends to be after they've already had the result, and it's too late to stop the worrying."

"Which is why you're so keen on informed consent before the first smear."

"Especially because mildly abnormal smears are so common – 10 per cent of those in women under 35."

"But that's the price you pay for trying to prevent cervical cancer."

"True, but it's a rare disease anyway. For every woman of screening age who dies from it, I see 10 deaths from breast disease and four from lung cancer. If it was a choice between giving up cigarettes or having smears to live longer, I know which I'd go for."

"So you're saying don't bother?"

"No, I'm saying make your own decision. If you don't mind the procedure and you can cope with the anxiety of an abnormal smear, then go for it. It'll reduce but not stop your already small risk of a very unpleasant disease. But if you think your risk is low and you'd rather not have one, don't feel coerced into it just because I get paid £2,000 for hitting the smear target."

"In that case, I think I'll have one."

"Fine. Have you tried the nurse?"

Twins tell us things about truths about pain that nobody else could

Some people feel pain more readily than others. Is that nature or nurture? New research involving identical and non-identical twins says it's nurture says Jeremy Lawrence.

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Tolerance of pain varies among individuals, in the same person from day to day, between the sexes and among nations. One of its most puzzling features is its variability. An injury on the sports field that hardly interrupts play may prove disabling if it occurs on a country walk. Among individuals, studies show that pain thresholds vary more than ten-fold, yet pain serves the same function in all of us – to warn of injury and trigger escape.

So why the variability? Doctors at St Thomas' hospital compared reactions in over 600 pairs of female twins – female, because they were the ones who volunteered for the study. They found that environmental influences proved more important in shaping

their response to pain than genetic factors.

The doctors, from the Twin Research Unit at St Thomas', tested each volunteer with a spring-loaded instrument like a giant plunger which was used to apply increasing pressure to a spot in the centre of their foreheads about the size of a five pence piece. The volunteers were asked to call out when they felt pain and the pressure was measured.

Half the pairs of twins in the study were identical with the same genetic make-up and half were non-identical, as genetically different as ordinary sisters. All had been reared together as twins in the same households, so shared the same upbringing and home environment.

The results, published this month in the medical journal *Pain*, showed a range in pain thresholds from half a kilo per square centimetre to 7.5 kilos, with most tolerating between two and four kilos. Each pair of twins had similar scores suggesting that their experience of pain was determined by something in their family background – but there was no difference between the identical and non-identical sets; indicating that genetic similarity had no influence. That left environmental factors – the influence of home and family.

Dr Tim Spector, director of the unit, said: "Looking at twins in this manner enables us to highlight the importance of shared environmental factors, such as family background, as

opposed to genetic factors, in determining a person's pain threshold. Clearly a person's family can have a great influence on their attitude to pain."

"Were the parents protective or dismissive when the child injured itself? Did the child get a reward or a clip round the ear? The parent's example would have been important, too. Was the Dad, for instance, always taking time off work and complaining or was he the stoical type who never complained?"

Identical twins Gillian Sonin and Judith Magnus were active, outdoor children who took knocks and bruises in their stride. Now both piano teachers at Mill Hill school in north London they believe the level-headed approach adopted by

their parents has shaped their own responses to pain. Both scored close to the average 2.5 kilos on the pain threshold measure.

Gillian said: "We were a pair of tomboys, always out on our bikes, falling in stinging nettles or going over the handlebars, like most children. Our parents made no undue fuss when we were hurt."

Judith added: "I took the top off my finger once, trapping it in a bicycle chain when I was four or five. I remember it very well. I wasn't frightened, I was just fascinated looking at it."

Identical twins Gillian Sonin and Judith Magnus were active, outdoor children who took knocks and bruises in their stride. Now both piano teachers at Mill Hill school in north London they believe the level-headed approach adopted by

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Studies suggest men have higher pain thresholds than women although women claim childbirth would crack any man's stiff upper lip. Pain thresholds tend to rise with age.

"Whether that is because older people have more pain or get less reward for putting up with it we do not know," Dr Spector said.

Northern Europeans tend to be more stoical than people from Mediterranean countries, whose culture encourages emotional expression. But is stoicism the right quality to

cultivate in yourself and your family? Not necessarily, according to Dr Spector.

In some ways stoicism can help you keep a job and get through life. But in others it may be a disadvantage. Arthritis is an area where the traditional stoic patient is treated later than they should have been. Complaining can be good for you."

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When it comes to sex, there's nothing quite like an honest Puck

"Every time a child says 'I don't believe in fairies,' there's a little fairy somewhere that falls down dead" (JM Barrie, 'Peter Pan'). In which case, over at the Royal Academy, they must be dropping as fast as flies in a Damien Hirst vitrine. For, as Tom Lubbock observes, it takes an adult imagination to appreciate the erotic potential of fairyland.

Do you believe in fairies? WB Yeats had a robust answer for the scoffers. "Imagination!" he would say with a withering contempt. "There wasn't much imagination when Farmer Hogan was dragged out of bed and thrashed like a sack of potatoes. That they did... they had 'um out, and thumped 'um, and that's not the sort of thing a man wants to imagine." I don't know whether this shows that Yeats was himself a believer, but it was an effective retort, because it made the sceptics look like the airy impractical ones; it was they, with their ideas of dainty, diaphanous entities, who were in thrall to a fancy.

It was a fancy partly created by the sort of images to be seen in "Victorian Fairy Painting" at the Royal Academy. This is a curious show, valuable in a way, because it focuses on pictures that - like

the fairies themselves - one is likely to dismiss as trifles; and, although the genre didn't produce more than a few good works, it was extensive, and part of a wider fairy cult that thrived through all the arts in the middle of the 19th century, and so needs reckoning with. The odd thing is that it was addressed to adults and didn't become child-centred until later in the century. And, dwelling on these teeming scenes of fay life by such as Joseph Noel Paton and John Anster Fitzgerald, you can't help asking how seriously, with what kind of seriousness, they're to be taken.

Literal belief seems not to be the issue, though no doubt the thought that some people did believe in them helped the subject

plained, urban, industrialised world. There's an implied cry of "Nay, thou shalt not rob life of its enchantment, O base utilitarian!" But it was more than a consoling game of let's pretend. It was, to use that shifty modern idiom, a myth - a fiction with deep and varied satisfactions, erotic, pantomime and spiritual.

The Fairy was re-invented for the purpose. Blake and Fuseli (important progenitors, not in the show) had added butterfly and insect wings to the traditional little people, a graft from mythological representations of Psyche. The newly devised point-work of the ballet inspired their light, twinkle-toes gait, very far from Yeats's thumpers. Theatre generally, with its extravagant spectacles,

was a big influence, and specifically Shakespeare, the Shakespearian of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or *The Winter's Tale*. Most of the earliest pictures feature Oberon, Titania, Puck, Ariel and company. But painting could also convey something that the stage couldn't so easily manage: a feeling of intimate voyeurism - and that seems to be one of the big appeals of the genre, the secret, transitory, trespassing glimpse that's likely to vanish if you look twice or if the fairies spot you first...

A feeling of intimate voyeurism is a big appeal of the genre

- the secret, transitory, trespassing glimpse that's likely to

vanish if you look twice or if the fairies spot you first...

carry some conviction. But fairies here are strictly imaginary; indeed that's the main point of them. They're mascots of The Imagination, a way of showing that you still had one in an ex-

cent, low-gravity orgies, waves of closely thronging flesh. Of course fairies are traditionally sex-related - as in the *Dream* - but it's disconcerting to see it pictured. There's something rathericky about a sex object only a few inches high (what do you do with it exactly? Just kind of finger it?) or in the idea of moving your hand through a cluster of muscle, wriggling bodies, or being swarmed all over. When the subject is Titania's dallying with Bottom (in Landseer's picture, say) the fairy Queen is shown human size, so as to remove these feelings; or, again, you can do a fairy just as a portly female nude with wings and something to indicate scale (as in John Simmons's *Titania*). But often the artists seem to emphasise how one might feel about fairy bodies by giving them a not quite human anatomy - slightly elongated, tapering, but with very solid thighs. They want it both ways, dainty and voluptuous too, and you're not quite sure if this is meant to be super-feminine or grotesque.

The big change of gear comes with Fitzgerald, and although he's very weird, it's a less troubling weirdness, because much more explicit. His fairies aren't conceived as real, tangible bodies. They're overtly psychological - not literary or folkloric, but mind figures, the products of bad dreams and laun-



The one acknowledged masterpiece of fairy art: Richard Dadd's 'Fairy Feller's Masterstroke'; and 'a limpid moment of moonlit stillness' from Francis Danby's 'Scene from A Midsummer Night's Dream' Tate Gallery, Oldham Art Gallery

dum hallucinations. A series of pictures has a sleeper (the artist or a young woman) troubled by impish visions, with the imagery drawing much on Bosch. The conception is avoidably sinister and grotesque, which actually diminishes both those qualities. And in his pure fairy scenes, spiky and luridly coloured, while he gets quite close to surrealists like Leonora Carrington, he also points to the child's fairy. These creatures are elaborately dressed from a botanical costume box, and their behaviour suggests children at play, out a perversely miniaturised adulthood.

Fairy painting produced one acknowledged masterpiece, Richard Dadd's *The Fairy Feller's Masterstroke*, painted by the artist when he was confined in Bethlehem asylum after murdering his father. It stays an extraordinary work, not very likeable, in fact extraordinary because so inhuman. It takes the stock accomplishments of fairy pictures - the play with scales, the obsessive detail - and pushes them to impossible extremes. The microscopic detailing seems to exceed the power of the human eye. The blades of grass that spread like a net over the scene are us

though seen by an actual weet person. The cast of figures, some human-looking, others more or less grotesque - like the fairies with their elephantine calves, the elf whose features are stretched and squashed as if in a distorting glass, and the grasshopper playing a trumpet - are observed with scary calm and normality.

And the paintwork is so richly and minutely textured as to be almost low relief, giving striking reality effects. The veined leaf appears pressed against the picture surface, and in the gravelly area at the fairy-feller's feet, it looks like Dadd

has mixed something gritty into the paint to get the puckering, but I bet he brought up each tiny bobble individually with infinite care and a very fine brush. The picture does its best to declare that it is no work of the imagination, neither seen by human eye nor painted by human hand - a fairy artefact itself. Believe it or not, it's the only painting in the show that could stand up to some sharp practical criticism from the likes of Farmer Hogan.

'Victorian Fairy Painting', at the Royal Academy to 8 February (0171-300 8000)

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Puck

I was a bad girl, a blank who didn't fit in. I lied to my mum, bunked off school – and got discovered

The time: May 1994

The place: Hammersmith Tube station, London

The woman: Shola Ama, singer

At fifteen, I was a bad girl hanging around with a lot of criminals. My boyfriends were stealing cars – I never got involved myself but when you're young, you're attracted to the excitement. I had a lot of trouble at school because I couldn't keep my mouth shut. I would often get sent out of class for swearing at the teacher. I did some sad, sad things like getting drunk on cider and throwing food in restaurants – I hope those people won't remember me.

My mother is Dominican / St Lucian, she's black and my dad's Scottish and white. It was difficult growing up mixed race. I remember when I was really young, looking at the mirror and wondering if my skin colour would change when I'm older – will it finally decide what it wants to be? It felt like a really nothingness race to be a blank. I felt really alone, I had cousins who were mixed race but they all looked Italian to me. I was the odd one out. People would ask, "Are you black or are you white?". I thought: "Why do I have to decide? I'm both."

My mum would play jungle and drum and bass music while I locked myself in my room with Mariah Carey – so she was listening to far hipper music than me! Pop music was a form of rebellion for me, because I've always wanted to be different. I used to get tapes and sing over them, forgetting completely that anybody else was on the track. That was how I started writing my own music.

When I was 15 I looked at my room and thought it was time for a change. I had Madonna everywhere: on the ceiling, on the chest of drawers, a bed cover, towels, cups and everything. It was so embarrassing, so I took the lot down, painted the room pink-

tachio green and started to seriously get into music for the first time.

It is such a terrible story, but I can't lie; on the day that changed my life I bunked off school to go and see a guy in prison. My mum said: "If you miss school to see that criminal, that will be it. You will not go out for two months!" I got up and left the house at the normal time but went to see this boy's sister. I dressed up and she fixed my hair because I really fancied him. It was a real proper visit with me, his mum, sister and best friend.

I was so excited about seeing him that on the way I started singing: "I'm going to see my boyfriend." As we went through the barrier at Hammersmith Tube station, I changed to "Anytime You Need A Friend" by Mariah Carey and the acoustics in the station meant my voice went round the tunnel. I wasn't showing off, I just loved the way it sounded.

A guy in a bright purple shirt, with dreadlocks and chains came up to me and started looking down at me. I thought: "Who is this weirdo?" He stood there with his personal organiser, he hit his finger and was really unsure of what to do. He asked me to sing something else, but I was certain that he was a pervert who was trying to get my number! However, when he told me his name was Kwame and that he played with a group called D'Influence I felt more at ease. I had seen them playing live at Wembley Arena as the support band for Michael Jackson, so I felt I could give him my telephone number. It might have been too trusting but I thought he couldn't kill me over the phone! I got on the train and forgot all about it.

I was more excited about visiting my boyfriend, because I'd never been on my own to a prison to see somebody. However, when I actually sat there, it was really sad – especially saying goodbye, knowing he was going back to his cell while I was going home.

Peter Garsden worked in Cheshire, in a mixed law practice. But for the last three-and-a-half years his work has been unmixed. He has become obsessed with the cases of victims of child abuse and, as Roger Dobson reports, the effect on his life has been shattering.



Shola Ama: 'Fame makes it hard to have a relationship. If a man knows there's nothing he can do for a woman he'll feel insecure and treat her like dirt.'

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

I couldn't tell my mum that I met a guy who liked my voice because she would have quizzed me about why I wasn't at school. So I went to visit Kwame at his house and I still didn't tell my mum! I got round to telling her, three weeks later, when I recorded a demo. She was really shocked and couldn't believe it was me singing my own song.

Kwame and I started making demos and doing small showcase concerts. He wanted to call me Little Shola Ama, I told him I wouldn't stay little for long so we ditched that idea. A few people were buzzing about me and I was having meetings with record companies. On the very day I had a meeting with one of the important ones, which was just around the corner from my college, these girls happened to start a fight with me. It was so petty, it was over a chewing gum wrapper being thrown and hitting one of their legs. Before I knew it I had six

people jumping on me and hitting me with keys. So I went to this meeting with scars all down my forehead. My manager was anxiously lying about it: "She had an accident in drama class – she fell off a ladder."

Finally there was a deal on the table for me at WEA, we signed it on my 17th birthday. Nothing happened for so long, it seemed I was never going to get anywhere. It took until I was 18 before I had a hit with "You Might Need Somebody". It's just as well it took a while from when I had my first gig to becoming successful because I had a lot of growing up to do.

Kwame is like a dad to me, and when I won best newcomer and best R&B at the MOBO [Music of Black Origin] awards and told him I loved him, tears welled up in his eyes and he cried. We are very close.

I don't really have a relationship with my real dad. He saw me as a tiny baby but he hasn't done much for me since which

is a bit of a disappointment. It would have left a big hole in my life if I hadn't understood when I was still quite young that I couldn't rely on him. You don't miss tomato ketchup if you've never tasted it, it's only when you've been used to having ketchup on your chips that you worry when it runs out. It makes me proud of what a good job my mother has made of bringing me and my sister up on her own. I know if the same happened to me, I could do it myself.

Fame has made it hard to have a relationship; it's hell. There's a lot of things people can't handle about my success, and a man wants to be a man. If he knows there is nothing he could do for a woman that she can't do for herself he feels insecure.

The only thing left is to treat her like dirt. I have been in a few very bad relationships. I've just come out of a relationship and that was quite a sensitive one because I was opening up a bit. I cried a lot, I'm genuinely

quite gutted because everybody can have a lover but me! But I suppose at this stage I don't need a someone in my life who is sick of me not being there all the time. I can't go out with my boyfriend and just be myself, I have to be aware that there are people who might want to stop me for an autograph. Which would you rather have: a top 10 album and two top five singles or a boyfriend?

I once dreamed in a million years that I would have hits all over the world. Doing all of this has helped me find myself. I know what I want from life. I think my mother is genuinely happy that I bunked off school that day.

Interview by Andrew G Marshall

Shola Ama's new single is "Who's Loving My Baby?" and during the last week in November she is headlining the Radio One sponsored Rhythm Nation Tour.

Their traumas, my trial – a Cheshire lawyer feels the pain of 220 children

Peter Garsden worked in Cheshire, in a mixed law practice. But for the last three-and-a-half years his work has been unmixed. He has become obsessed with the cases of victims of child abuse and, as Roger Dobson reports, the effect on his life has been shattering.

It was just before midday on a Tuesday morning in May when Peter Garsden answered a telephone call that was to change his life. At the time he was a partner in a Cheshire firm of solicitors specialising in personal injury, as well as the usual small town mix of cases and clients.

But the 32-year-old man on the other end of the telephone had an altogether different kind of story. He was a sexual abuse victim and was the first of more than 200 men and women who

were to allege they had been abused when they were in children's homes in the North-west of England.

Three years on from that first phone call, Peter Garsden's life has been turned inside out. He has become obsessed with fighting for compensation for the 220 men and women whose vivid descriptions of the appalling abuse they suffered haunt him every day.

And the price of his obsession has been high. His marriage is in difficulties, relationships with his two young daughters have changed, he suffers with depression, has sleeping problems and, on one occasion, broke down while making a speech about abuse to MPs.

Peter Garsden's experiences highlight the emotional strain faced by lawyers dealing with the rising tide of child abuse cases. Unlike victims, perpetrators, policemen and social workers, lawyers do not have access to counselling to help them cope.

Back in that spring of 1994, Mr Garsden appeared to have everything going for him. He was 37 and a partner in the firm of Abney Garsden McDonald which he had co-founded nine years earlier. He had a £200,000 house in Macclesfield, and was happily married with two young girls, Vanessa and Alexandra.

"Life was pretty good. The client who rang me that morning had been interviewed by the police as part of the North-west abuse inquiry, and they had suggested he talk to a solicitor. That was my first contact with an abuse victim," he said.

That inquiry by Cheshire Police was to become Britain's biggest and longest investigation into child abuse in children's homes with more than 2,000 former residents traced.

"The man told me that he had been abused sexually for three years while at the children's home by a care worker. He found it very embarrassing,

and at that time, I did too."

It was some months later, when he became the lead solicitor in the group of lawyers representing around 220 victims of abuse, that the pressures began to mount when he read the statements of all the victims.

"As a professional you try to

boy, who is now a practising homosexual, was assaulted at a very young age by a teacher who had venereal disease.

"After he buggered the boy, the youngster, who was very young at the time, was taken to hospital. His anus was sewn up where it had been ripped and,

at that point in my speech when I was overcome with emotion and had to stop in mid-sentence.

"I then had to stand back and take stock. I used to be the sort of person who could shut the door on a Friday night and put the office to bed until Monday morning. I was not a person who let things get to him, but this case has taken over my life.

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16/LEADER & LETTERS

Adding educational value is a long and arduous game



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Power to the GPs

Sir: The preview of the White Paper on the NHS (report, 12 November) suggests it will contain interesting and commendable plans. Replacement of GP fundholding with larger groupings of GPs is welcome, as is the idea of a budget combining hospital, primary and community care.

This will indeed break down a "Berlin Wall" but it is a pity that the opportunity is not being taken to remove the other artificial barrier between purchaser and provider. This has no remaining purpose if the market is to go, and if it is retained so will be much of the market and its attendant bureaucracy.

The glaring omission is any reference to democratic accountability. There seems little point in reforming appointments to trust boards and health authorities on Nolan principles if 90 per cent of the budget (and therefore the power) is in the hands of GP collectives. To whom will the latter be responsible? Better to combine the GP collectives with the public health expertise of existing health authorities, which should have boards properly accountable to the people of the area.

Removal of competition between trusts probably removes the need for trust boards, with further savings. The tighter management from "the centre" which is envisaged as replacing what competition raises the question of where that managerial function will lie. It strengthens the argument for a powerful and accountable health authority.

PETER FISHER
Chairman
National Health Service
Consultants' Association
Great Bourton, Oxfordshire

Sir: The leaked White Paper on the future of the NHS suggests that a central concern for the new government is equality of health care for all.

A crucial starting point is fair distribution of NHS funds based on a careful statistical analysis of relative needs. As approximately 95 per cent of patient contact with healthcare services occurs in primary care, often the GP's surgery, it may surprise your readers to learn that the allocation of NHS funds to general practice has never been subject to any analysis at all.

Could do better. The only educational policy worth the name is one that strives for all-round improvement, in attendance records, exam results, skills acquisition, and pupils' attitudes. Improvement is happening – praise where it is due to the heads, teachers, parents and pupils making the effort. But on the evidence of today's spread of data it is far too patchy.

These latest "league tables" are, or ought to be, a map for education's general staff. The military metaphor is apt; if not national survival then national prosperity, let alone social equilibrium, depend on continuing improvement, especially in the lower divisions. It's going to be a long march, too. If consistent improvement in exam results over the past three years is a fair test, then what we learn today is how few schools are on the upward curve. An improvement ratio of 5 per cent is not good enough – even if these tables are distorted by including those schools (mainly in the private sector) which are pretty much incapable of betterment.

Do the improving schools offer lessons for the rest? Among them the City Technology Colleges and the grant-maintained schools figure prominently. It would be churlish to deny that these Conservative innovations have been good for their parents and pupils, but equally it would be naive not to ask some searching questions about the policy of preference which has underpinned them. Material resources are part of their story. A new school is a solid basis for improvement. That pretty much sums up most CTCs, as they started life in the early 1990s. Grant-maintained schools in their early years enjoyed, generally speaking, favourable allocations.

The difficulty is stripping out of this evidence the effect of schools' selection policies, however covert. Schools that select ought to score high on attainment tests. The London Oratory, to name a famous name, clearly chooses its pupils on the basis of aspiration and (parental) attitude if not formally on test scores. If it and grant-maintained schools like it had become

more selective in the past, that might explain higher attainment at 16 and 18-plus.

The key question behind all such educational data is whether a school is "adding value". Selectivity itself ought to be irrelevant to general measures of improvement, unless other schools are forced to enrol higher concentrations of children from the middle and lower ability bands. Educational progress rests on more schools doing better with unpromising material – using that phrase not in some snippy sense, but as an accurate summation of the multiple barriers to learning among certain classes of pupils.

Only by raising performance among the ranks of children of mediocre ability will we raise the overall level of our educational standing. Bluntly, in the high skill working environment of the future, that is the only way those individuals are going to have any real prospect of prosperity and security. And it is prosperity and security that young people themselves mostly aspire to, according to the survey we are

publishing this week, sponsored by the Industrial Society.

The most exciting findings of these tables come from Sheffield, Salford and Tower Hamlets in London from schools with unpromising catchments which are pushing up their results year by year. It is there that lessons are to be learnt. No school should ever be condemned to "sink" status, and the first task is identification. This map leaves Labour in no doubt about where policies to combat under-performance need to be focused. (A word or two of praise from Labour ministers for their Conservative predecessors for making this data possible would not go amiss, either.)

Take the tables on truancy. They make depressing reading. Truancy and social exclusion are close relatives. Here is evidence that, for example, the City of Kingston-upon-Hull and Nottingham are failing to educate far too high a proportion of their young people. Is it a coincidence that the local authorities in those areas have re-

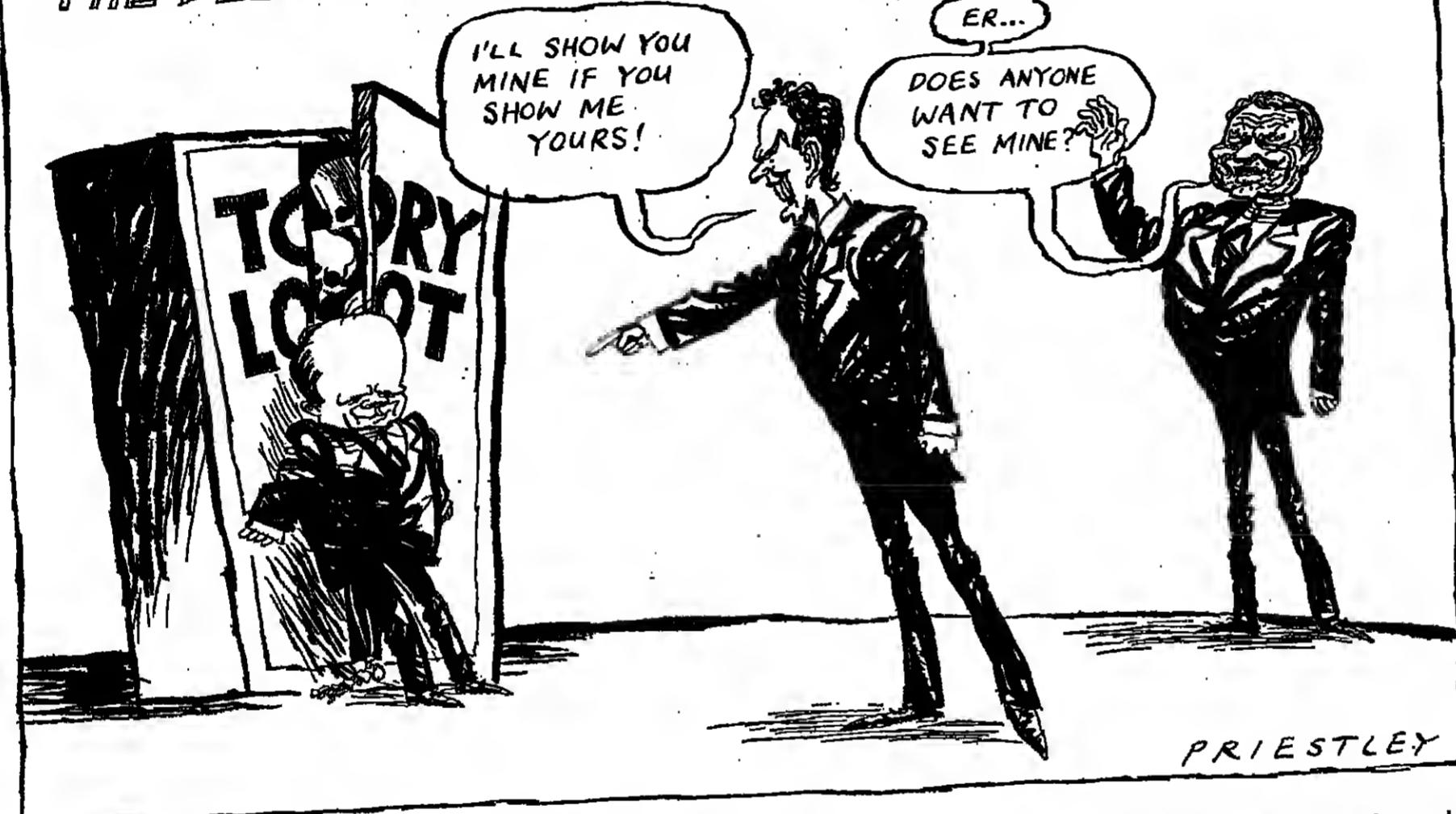
cently taken over administration of schools from county councils? The centre does not only have to ask what the relevant councils are doing about non-attendance, but to collaborate in the task of getting children back, and cajole those who do not respond quickly enough.

Ministers know that, in the end, they cannot run schools from the centre. Making public examples of the heads of failing schools, while salutary, is only a last resort. The real business is done by building up an effective teaching team, bringing parents in, constructing an ethos of attainment, providing the kind of support that enables long-term improvement.

The people who can really change the system are already in it: teachers, and their head teachers. We must hope that they have collectively accepted the value of the kind of indicators published today, recognising, of course, that they are only one set of indicators among many. These lessons are not to be dismissed – they must be acted on, above all at school level.

LETTERS

THE DEBATE OVER PARTY FUNDING HOTS UP....



Essentially the present "assumption" is that there are two levels of need: that patients older than 75 require twice as much care as those below that age.

The most elementary studies show that age alone is a crude measure of medical need, and even here ratios of demand rise from the age of 50 years to double by 65, treble by 75 and increase by four to six times above 75.

Relatively to your needs, the older you become the less NHS funds your GP is given.

Dr R C GILBERTSON
Christchurch, Dorset

Blair's apology

Sir: How refreshing to listen to Tony Blair, and read his apology over the Formula One scandal (report, 17 November). Politicians are human beings – although many of them try hard to conceal the fact. They are fallen, flawed and fal-

ible like the rest of us. Why must they struggle to project an aura of perfection?

Tony Blair has done more to earn the respect of the British public with a two-minute honest apology than all his predecessors with their bluster and evasion of responsibility.

HUGH J THOMSON
Birmingham

Sir: I am a lifelong Labour supporter and I am dismayed by the appalling spectacle of our high-minded leader squirming on the skewer of sleaze allegations.

At one level, the "cash for favours" row is nowhere near as bad as the financial scandals that rocked John Major's government – Labour is after all returning the Formula One money. At another level – what one might almost call the spiritual level – it is far, far worse. Labour came to power on an anti-sleaze ticket. Tony Blair invited us to trust him

and we responded to his appeal. It is too early to say we feel betrayed, but certainly our faith has been badly shaken.

It is like being in a marriage where all the evidence points towards our spouse's infidelity yet we still can't quite believe it.

In any case, if the Government isn't corrupt it has acted with scarcely believable incompetence in allowing itself to be presented as corrupt. The Prime Minister must resolve never to allow anything like this to happen again.

STUART RUSSELL
Poulton, Gloucestershire

Unliberated gays

Sir: Kathy Marks cannot be allowed to claim (Features, 11 November) that "after three decades of campaigning, many

of the lesbian and gay legal battles have been won and remaining inequalities look set to

be tackled by the Labour government".

Those three decades have brought nothing but failure on the legal front. In England in

1967 there was a higher age of consent for gay men. If a man and a woman had sex in public, the charge was "indecency".

If two men, "gross indecency". If three people (male and female) had sex together, it was a party. If three gay men had sex together it was a criminal offence.

We have never been had so good.

MICHAEL MASON
London SW7

BZW deal

Because of a production error, the following letter was omitted from early editions yesterday.

Sir: You published an article on 14 November purporting to describe a video conference of our managing directors that took place the previous day.

Let us set the record straight.

We are pleased to have agreed to acquire the European equity and investment banking business of BZW, which we regard as a high-quality and complementary addition. We are also conscious of the hard work and substantial investment needed to integrate the two firms successfully.

Our partisan references to glorying, boasting and the like are mischievous and dangerous.

You claim we forecast "mass [back-office] sackings". This is wholly untrue. We expect to employ several hundred BZW back-office staff whose skills we greatly value. Indeed, our need for the relevant back-office staff was a specific condition set by us during the negotiations.

STEPHEN HESTER
Chief Financial Officer
Credit Suisse First Boston
London E14

Black angels

Sir: Trevor Phillips ("Black Angels?", 15 November) mentioned Aretha Franklin and her right to a place in heaven. He ought also to have mentioned Roberta Flack. Way back in 1969 her debut album *First Take* included the song "Angelitos Negros", and she is quoted in the sleeve notes: "Painters, why do you always paint white virgins? Paint beautiful black angels."

SANDRA BROWNE HART
Barnham, Suffolk

Everywhere

Sir: It is the word "absolutely" that is ubiquitous (letter, 14 November). Just listen to any interview.

BERNICE PEDGLEY
Wallingford, Oxfordshire

More of the proverbial from Albania: plenty of wit, not a lot of wisdom



MILES
KINGTON

It's time for more Albanian proverbs today, from the *Great Book of Albanian Proverbs* which I am slowly translating in my declining years. Albanian proverbs, if you have never come across them before, are exactly the opposite of ours. Ours are short, pithy and fairly useless until you start thinking about them; Albanian proverbs sound fairly deep and meaningful unless you start thinking about them.

Here goes, then, with some meretricious wit and wisdom!

Never ask a Formula One Grand Prix racing driver to teach you the technique of reversing a car.

If birds were able to talk, would they bother to sing?

When does a letter arrive? When the post-

man delivers it? When it is opened and read? Or when it is answered?

A lift spends 50 per cent of its time going up and 50 per cent of its time going down, but from the name it is given in all countries – ascensor, elevator, lift, etc – you would deduce that it could only go up, not down.

Nobody knows all the words of his own national anthem.

You can get sea-sick in a set of revolving doors, but you can't cross to France in them.

All parrots think they are teaching us to say "Pretty Polly" or "Who's a pretty girl then?" When they think we have mastered the phrase, they give up. But we don't see it that way. We think that parrots lose the knack of talking, whereas all that has

happened is that they have given up teaching us.

Who will send the Queen a telegram when she is 100?

Nobody ever really believes he is going to die. If they did, they would be working on their dying words now.

There is only one thing worse than a hymn, and that is a Christmas carol.

Aeroplane disaster movies are over shown as in-flight entertainment on aeroplanes. It is the only good thing to be said about air travel.

It would be easier to take the single currency seriously if the word "euro" wasn't pronounced quite differently in every country.

If we are ever invaded by aliens who feed on electricity, we will be sorry that we left our pylons unguarded.

People are sometimes described as natural blondes and sometimes as natural brunettes, but nobody is ever described as naturally bald.

Woe betide the substitute who scores a goal in his first game, for much will be expected of him.

Angling must be one of the most feminine activities in the world. It is quiet, organised and moderately healthy, and requires endless patience. Why are all anglers men, then? Because all sensible women also think it is entirely pointless.

If I had been condemned to death in the

Middle Ages, and had been given the choice of the method of execution, I hope I would have had the presence of mind to ask to be electrocuted.

There are two kinds of people who make jokes about their cheques possibly bouncing – those who are quite sure their cheques won't bounce and those who are quite sure they will.

The man who sneers at take-away food will happily go out on a picnic, and the man who passionately defends live entertainment is furious whenever a cinema is turned into a bingo hall.

An after-dinner speaker: One who would willingly do the speaking for half the money if he could be allowed to miss the dinner.

Freedom of information gets caught in the spin

DONALD MACINTYRE
NOT-SO-OPEN GOVERNMENT

Most of what Tony Blair apologised for on Sunday had to do with information. In hindsight, he didn't think that it was a good idea to dribble out the facts about Bernie Ecclestone's £1m donation to the Labour Party, under pressure, and at the rate of one new fact a day. (He was right.) And hey, yes, of course he was prepared to publish the note taken of his meeting with the Formula One boss. No problem – except that here the Prime Minister issued an interesting caveat. Not once but twice. This wasn't, he emphasised, to be regarded as a precedent. Otherwise, as he pointed out, "people will be asking me to publish everything". Perfectly sensible, of course; civil servants, and quite a lot of other people, would be understandably horrified if they thought that every time the Prime Minister got some bad headlines he was planning to publish details of his recent private meetings to still doubts of any jiggery-pokery. But could it also just be that a corner of his subconscious mind was focused on quite an intense debate going on in the higher reaches of government over just how much it should be prepared to disclose about its internal deliberations?

For negotiations on next month's Freedom of Information White Paper are coming to a head. This is a big step. At the most unglamorous level, next year's Bill will underpin existing rights, and afford some new ones, to information about the sort of humdrum administrative decisions that don't make headlines but matter intensely to ordinary people. Why hasn't Medicine X been banned? Why hasn't Community Centre Y been granted a drinks licence? Why has new development Z been given the go ahead on my doorstep? What does the environmental inspection report really say about the chemical factory at the end of my road? It should widen the right of access to those of your personal files held by – for example – the DSS or the Inland Revenue or the Police, which are not on computer and therefore not covered by the Data Protection Act. It will also give new force to the obligations imposed on departments by the non-statutory Code of Access to Government Information, established by John Major's government. It will probably create a new Information Commissioner who will be able to weigh any possible damage from a particular application for disclosure against the public interest. And it will extend the obligations to local authorities and dozens of powerful quangos and nationalised industries. So, surely, a liberal cultural change measure in all respects?

Well, all but one, actually. For ministers have now started to baulk at the prospect of even a heavily qualified right to see information in the category of exemption described in the Major code as "internal discussion and advice". Which means pretty well every piece of paper, however impersonal, that passes around Whitehall in the run-up to a decision. The majority on the committee appear to have accepted the hoary old argument that the possible release in-

der the Freedom of Information Act of any advice drawn up by officials will, in the words of the Major code, "inhibit the frankness and candour of internal discussion". But even the Tory Cabinet Office minister Roger Freeman made it clear that if the harm from disclosure was outweighed by the public interest, then such material could, at least in theory, be published. The fear among liberals now is that when the code, or rather a version of it, becomes statutory, the whole category of such information will be subject to blanket exclusion. So in one respect the new bill would actually be less progressive than the much derided Major code.

Now the "candour" argument should be taken with a large pinch of salt. Nobody seriously believes – say – that anyone is going to be required to disclose a minute from Jonathan Powell, Chief of Staff, to the Prime Minister saying: "I know it's nuisance, but we've got to see Bernie Ecclestone because we're into him for a million and it's the least he expects"; or alternatively one in which he says: "For God's sake don't see Ecclestone. This will be trouble which will only blow up in your face." But Action on Smoking and Health, or anyone else for that matter, might reasonably at some point in the future ask to see the analysis of the policy options made in October/November 1997 on whether or not to support the exemption, including the DTI's analysis of how many and what sort of jobs would have been lost if Formula One went out of the country. That sort of subsequent disclosure doesn't compromise civil servants; but it may well make for better decisions. And while we're about it, who would have been damaged by publication of the Treasury's log and thoughtful look at itself last year? It was the fact of the leak, and not the content, which made it a sensation.

In Australia senior civil servants were deeply worried about precisely the "candour" issue. Since the Freedom of Information Act there, they have admitted it hasn't been a problem. All sorts of other arguments will be used in favour of the restrictive, conservative approach. One is the cost of dealing with FOI applications – though this could be alleviated by charging a higher differential rate for business applicants and, perhaps, diverting some of the Government's press and publicity officers to Freedom of Information duties. Nor, by the way, are we talking about *immediate* disclosure. It wouldn't even affect the new higher art form of democracy, news management. In most countries where there is an act, the commissioner or his equivalent routinely rules against disclosure on "harm" grounds if it would affect an issue then in the headlines. Any Information Commissioner is bound to weed out the material that compromises civil servants or undermines collective Cabinet responsibility.

The most interesting question may be which way Lord Irvine, who is chairing the committee, leans. At present, according to some accounts, Jack Straw is influential at the hawkish end of the argument on the committee, a rather lonely David Clark at the other. Mr Clark, regularly tipped as a Cabinet casualty, and with an unnecessary penchant for first-class air travel, may not be the most charismatic of politicians. But that doesn't necessarily make him wrong. Unless the Bill holds out the possibility for publication, in due time, of some internal advice, it will miss a big opportunity for an incremental but worthwhile government reform; it will also mean that ministers will come under continuing and tiresome pressure to do more. For what a more open regime – allowing publication of limited policy discussion within the lifetime of an administration, rather than when 30 years have elapsed – may well help to achieve is better, more thoughtful, government. And, finally enough, good governments tend to last longer.

What a gentile can learn from a Jewish joke

SHEENA McDONALD
MINORITY STRATEGEMS

Tired of domestic *Sturm und Drang*? Why not see how your neighbours manage things.

In Alabama this month, the courts outlawed Christian prayers in schools. The protests have been noisy and embittered. The Antichrist is abroad insists the fundamentalist Christian Coalition. The ruling is a rallying point for extremists, who frame their propaganda as defying an unreasonable assault on the

freedom to worship, but whose spiritual forefathers deployed the rack and flame. TV screens are filled with images of children praying in public, while their parents lament their inability to do so in school.

Alan Dershowitz, the renowned Harvard law professor, scents trouble. Favour the majority in as explosive an arena as religion, and you sow the seeds for downgrading, distancing, expelling, exiling the minority – and reaping the dragon-toothed lawlessness of terrorism. Conciliated problems encourage dangerous solutions. And his family, along with millions of others around the world, know directly what aacismic a "solution" can be.

"We Jews made up 4 per cent of the population [in the US] 10 years ago. By the end of the decade we'll be 2 per cent. Early in the new millennium, we'll make up just 1 per cent. And we think we can afford to be divided amongst ourselves?"

Dershowitz, epitomised to the point of caricature as the fast talkin', high carlin', self-

promotin' liberal celebrity New York lawyer, is addressing a gathering of New Yorkers, assembled in a vast airy Upper West Side synagogue to hear him debate what it means to be Jewish, with another bright, shining star of East Coast intellect, David Mamet.

Dershowitz, now helping out the defence team on the Woodward appeal, in addition to his regular workload, plus 13 *pro bono* cases ("Never turn down a capital case – never!") is doing nothing on this November afternoon to dilute his coast-to-coast notoriety for overstepping the mark. "Two Jews sitting in a cafe in Vienna in 1938 – one's reading his community paper, he sees his friend reading the vilest anti-Semitic rag in the city. 'Why are you reading that trash?' It makes me feel better about myself. Your paper – all you read is what we lost, how we failed, how we're repressed. This paper – it says the Jews run everything! The banks, big business, international trade ...'"

I flinch, but I'm beguiled. My neighbours laugh. It's what they came for. As the tasse be-

tweeo liberal and orthodox wings for the heart of Jewry takes hold on both sides of the Atlantic, the community's public figures find their utterances pored over for crucial significance. Jokes define and position as much as affirmations of faith.

The two men are now talking questions, and the majority are pitched at Dershowitz, who has stolen the show with his pace and wit. Mamet, so true on the page, stage and screen in his authentic reproduction of the numberless mardrille dialects of North America, turns out to be endearingly hesitant in his very own. Dershowitz, in contrast, has not only a considerate answer for each point, he gift-wraps it with jokes, one-liners and parables.

Dershowitz broadcasts his own kind of assimilation. I, a lone Gentile in this congregation, a minority within a minority, think he means, honour your own beliefs and be secure enough in them to respect others' differences, the better to promote their respect for yours. And I'm comfortable with that, I think. Raised within the faith of the majority,

I have always smiled tolerantly on the "rest". I feel comfortable enough here today, distanced from the dispute that occupies this assembly.

So why is this liberal dealing in ethnographic statistics? What kind of racial protectionism has invaded the philosophy of this man who asserts that "the moment you convert to Judaism, you were at Sinai – you were always a Jew"? I thought for a moment he might be advocating quotas and ideal proportions in a city whose schools cater for the needs of the young speakers of over a hundred native tongues. But in fact he is warning against the stockade mentality that envelops much of America. He has confidence that no matter how small his minority, it can still make positive contributions to the larger society.

He might, I realise, have quoted another notorious Jew from times past, but not even his *chutzpah* runs to ironically invoking the challenge issued in another great temple in a disputed land: "Render unto Caesar ..." The message is an

cient, but new-minted daily in the US. Do not confuse faith and state. That way lies institutionalised intolerance and the seeds of self-destruction. And demonstrating and practising division within your own faith weakens it, as surely as the extremists hope to strengthen it.

But back home, this is a message that seems inadequate to the challenges of the Old World. Around the Mediterranean, administrations have become tainted with the violence of extremism they failed to quench. Indulging certain minorities has not created broad, tolerant churches.

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In markets, the worst rarely happens. But don't count on it



ANDREAS WHITTAM SMITH
INFERNAL MACHINES

Finally, the bad news from the world's financial markets has got to me. I didn't worry in October, when the newspapers were full of articles demonstrating the uncanny similarity between current conditions and those of October 1987, the last occasion when the world's stockmarkets fell out of bed. Nor was I alarmed when a copycat shake-out duly appeared, right on cue. Since then, after all, Wall Street and London and the main European bourses have regained some of the ground they gave up.

Until now, I have shrugged off Thailand's banking crisis. In the case of Indonesia, I have been unmoved by the massive support package which the International Monetary Fund has had to make available. The fact that poor President Suharto has had to close down banks owned by his relatives I found perverse, encouraging. I accepted the comment from an economist in Singapore who was quoted as saying that "the Indonesian Government seems very much committed to the reform package and things should move along".

But then I perceived a dangerous phenomenon which occasionally appears in the financial markets. I call it an "infernal machine", in the dictionary definition of the phrase – an apparatus, usually disguised, for producing an explosion to destroy life or property. This is a good description of what is happening to Japanese banks. They are being destroyed.

What is the infernal machine which is responsible? A substantial part of the reserves of Japanese banks comprises shares in Japanese companies. As the Japanese stockmarket has deteriorated, dropping by a quarter since June, so the reserves that Japanese banks hold have shrunk. By law, however, Japanese banks are required to maintain their resources at a level sufficient to repay depositors should there be unusual demands for cash.

Sensing this squeeze, investors in Japanese shares have grown frightened and sold more shares. The stockmarket falls again. The squeeze intensifies. The banks call in their loans. Their customers begin to



Bowing out: Hokkaido Takushoku Bank president Sadamasa Kawatani (third from right) with other board members, apologising yesterday following the collapse of their Japanese bank

Photograph: Reuters

feel the pain. And the infernal machine, disguised as it is, starts to explode the Japanese banking system and with it property, in the sense that the value of all assets declines sharply.

Just as I was reflecting on this mechanism, there came the news of the collapse of Japan's tenth largest bank, Hokkaido Takushoku. Yesterday the bank announced that it was going out of business. Here was the test. Only governments have the power to break the vicious circle. What would the Japanese government do? It decided to protect depositors by advancing funds for that purpose alone. In relief the Japanese stockmarket registered big gains.

But this is the single response that governments can make to such a crisis. Even if they have to print banknotes, they can make sure that depositors are repaid. They cannot do much about the other ill consequences. They cannot overnight restore a healthy banking system which provides working capital for successful companies and finance for international trade. They cannot prevent the substantial slowing down in economic activity that a banking crisis necessarily entails.

Moreover, in the rest of Asia where banks have developed weaknesses and started to rock on their foundations – in an area stretching from South Korea via Hong Kong (which has witnessed sporadic panic withdrawals of deposits) through Thailand and Malaysia, and down to Indonesia – governments are not behaving as decisively as the Japanese. In Indonesia, where 16 private banks have recently failed, individual depositors and businesses can only retrieve

\$5,700 from their accounts. Repayment of additional amounts must wait until the bank's assets are sold off – which may take years and yield little. It is because of developments like this that an entire economic region, until recently so vibrant, one of the motors of the world economy, is losing they gave up.

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Sensing this squeeze, investors in Japanese shares have grown frightened and sold more shares. The stockmarket falls again. The squeeze intensifies. The banks call in their loans. Their customers begin to

feel judgement so long as the infernal machine demolishing the Japanese banking system can be stopped. For it has an even more dreadful power to wreak damage. It can work internationally. Suppose the Japanese stockmarket reverses this week's gains and begins to sink again. As a result the shortage of bank credit for companies outside the first league, and the absence of liquidity for institutions with large stockmarket holdings, would grow more acute. At this point they might begin to sell part of their massive holdings on Wall Street, where they have huge profits, magnified by currency movements, ripe for the taking. This is how it works. Japanese investors have taken as a signal to get out of South America's more pedestrian business sectors. The effects have been dramatic and disturbing.

Last week the Brazilian stockmarket dropped 10 per cent in a single day, bringing the cumulative decline to 40 per cent in three weeks. The government has responded with the familiar medicine, which makes the patient feel much worse in the initial stages. It has doubled interest rates, cut government spending and increased taxes. Brazil, one of the biggest economies in the world, plays a pivotal role in South America. For example it takes half of Argentina's exports.

But something even more worrying happened at the same time. The countries that make up the South American trade group (Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay) raised their external tariff from 12 per cent to 15 per cent in response to the turmoil in world markets. Were they affected by the clear sign, given by the American congress ten days ago, that it can be expected not to be negligible.

Not negligible; I can accept

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19/BUSINESS

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FINANCIAL JOURNAL OF THE YEAR

Puck

BAe threatens to take Airbus work abroad in aid row

British Aerospace is threatening to relocate some of its Airbus work abroad, amid indications that it will be refused £120m in launch aid to develop a new stretched version of the A340 jet. As Michael Harrison reports, the move would put thousands of jobs at risk and raise question marks over Britain's role in the four-nation consortium.

The Treasury and the Department of Trade and Industry are poised to reject BAe's application for launch investment for the new A340-500 and 600 aircraft.

The development has come as a shock, since only last Friday the DTI announced a £200m aid package for Rolls-Royce to develop a version of its Trent engine to power the 375-seater Airbus jet.

The recommendation not to grant government support to BAe is understood to have been made by the Paymaster General, Geoffrey Robinson, who has been vetting the application as part of his overall responsibility for public-private partnerships. Both the President of the Board of Trade, Margaret Beckett, who is in New Delhi at the moment as part of trade mission to India and Australia, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, are understood to have discussed the situation.

Spokesmen for both the DTI and the Treasury denied that a decision had been made, adding that the application was still under active consideration. However, a BAe spokesman said: "If the rumours are true that launch aid will be refused then there will be very serious consequences."

It is understood that BAe would review its investment strategy with the intention of carrying out the Airbus work in a country where government support would be forthcoming.

"It would be reasonable to speculate that BAe would look very seriously at whether it would want to continue investing in the UK as far as the Airbus programme is concerned," said one senior industry source.

Tunnel link group rules out stopping short of London

The consortium chosen to build the high-speed Channel Tunnel rail link yesterday emphatically ruled out stopping the line short of central London and said its plans to raise up to £5.4bn in finance and let key tunnelling contracts remained on course. Michael Harrison reports.

London & Continental Railways (LCR), which was awarded the franchise to operate rail services to the tunnel in May last year, said the option of phasing the project or ending the route at Stratford in Essex or Ebbsfleet in Kent had been "discarded as fundamentally flawed".

Adam Mills, chief executive of LCR, said both it and the Government were so committed to building the 68-mile link right through to St Pancras station in central London that the issue of alternatives had not even been discussed with John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Transport, Environment and the Regions.

"There is no doubt in my mind that the link will be built as planned because first that is what we are legally contracted by the Government to do and second because all the evaluation we have done shows that the economics of the project would not work if it ended anywhere else," Mr Mills said.

He added that preferred contractors for £500m worth of tunnelling work into London would be announced before Christmas with the contracts let in the spring.

LCR also intends to present detailed proposals to the City covering the financing and building of the link early in the new year ahead of a £5.4bn fund-raising exercise in the middle of next year.

Although LCR is still proceeding on the basis of floating on the stock market as an independent business, Mr Mills did not rule out participation in the project by a third party.

The consortium is talking to seven other parties including Railtrack about how they could help with the financing and construction of the link.

LCR said it remained con-

cerned that the capital cost of the project would not exceed £3bn in 1995 prices. However, together with working capital for its existing train operation, Eurostar, and financing costs, the peak funding requirement could reach £5.4bn.

LCR confirmed that the fire inside the Channel Tunnel a year ago had affected passenger growth rates for its Eurostar service and said it would set out details of its new forecasts to the

City in its presentation early next year. Eurostar will handle about 6 million passengers this year compared with a forecast by the tunnel operator Eurotunnel of 6.7 million. Eurotunnel put Eurostar passenger numbers at 9.6 million next year and 10.6 million in 1999.

Mr Mills said the link was still on schedule to open, as planned, in 2003 and that tenders had been invited for two-thirds of the construction cost.

At his new job Mr Staples was still paid a package of around a quarter of a million pounds.

Neil Ashley, chairman of Amey,

said he was the driving force behind the link-up between Norweb and North West Water which produced United Utilities," Mr Ashley said.

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THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

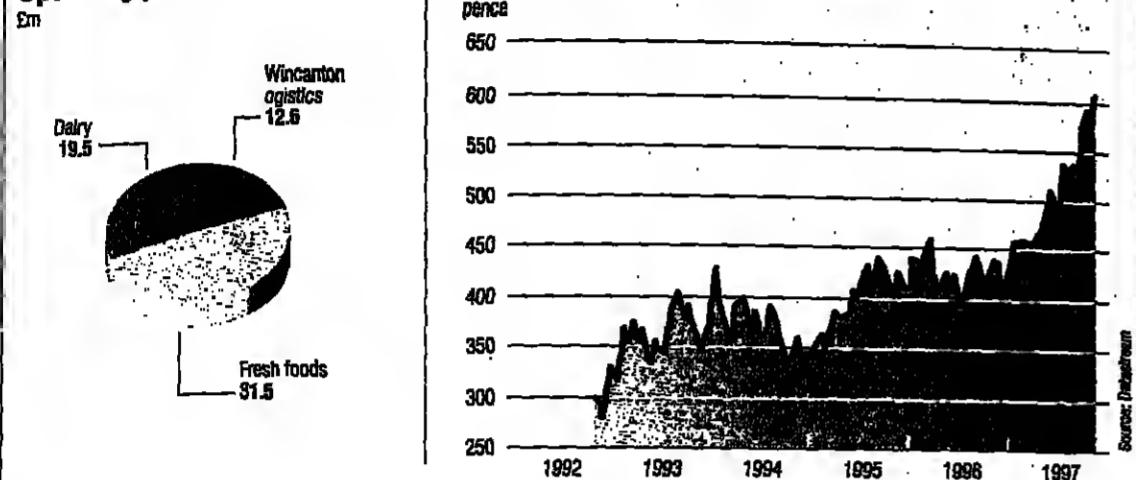
Unigate: At a glance

Market value: £1.43bn, share price 599p

Five-year record

	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991
Turnover (£bn)	1.89	2.13	2.41	1.14	1.18
Pre-tax profits (£m)	55.3	29.2	29.2	11.3	11.3
Earnings per share (p)	19.8	11.3	37.2	19.0	21.3
Dividends per share (p)	18.2	19.2	19.2	19.2	19.2

Operating profit by activity



Cash pile is key factor at Unigate

Unigate has been a good investment over the past three years as shareholders have focused more on the steadily growing fresh foods side of the business and less on the slowly declining milk arm. Although the balance of those two has resulted in only gradually improving profits, the re-rating of the shares over the past three years has seen them double in value to yesterday's 600p, up 5p.

Profits for the six months to September were in line or slightly better than analysts' expectations. Pre-tax profits increased 11 per cent to £67.4m thanks to higher underlying profits and more interest in Unigate's still burgeoning cash pile. Earnings per share of 21.3p were 10 per cent higher and the interim dividend rose 7 per cent to 7.5p.

Behind the headline figures lay good growth in the food operations – fresh foods and dairy – and a steady performance from the Wincanton logistics business which is recovering from last year's transport problems.

St Ivel's chilled products were the driving force, with the Utterly Butterly and Vitalite spreads giving Unigate an impressive 24 per cent share of that market and Shape yogurts posting a 25 per cent volume gain after a marketing push.

Dairy recorded an 11 per cent increase in profits, on modestly rising turnover, thanks to lower raw milk

prices and cost reductions. The problems over the past four years since the Milk Marketing Board was replaced by the private monopoly Milk Marque now appear to be behind the company.

From an investment point of view, what matters is what Unigate plans to do with its £170m cash pile. Sir Ross Buckland, chief executive, was pretty coy on that subject yesterday, although he did say a share buyback was less likely than further acquisitions. That is good news, because a return of cash to shareholders could only expect to enhance earnings per share by around 7 per cent, whereas a sensible acquisition ought to be able to add more to the medium term.

Even without further acquisitions, Unigate's shares still look reasonable value even after their recent run. With analysts forecasting an acceleration of profits growth to £140m this year and £150m next time, they trade on an undemanding prospective price/earnings multiple of around 13. That discount is probably an unfair reflection of what are now much higher quality earnings.

It's been a bit quieter at Emap since its recent boardroom spat, but things have been bubbling away in the background, as yesterday's £85m acquisition of Macmillan Magazines' health services

division indicated. Through the deal, Emap has inherited six well-known trade titles, including *Nursing Times* and *Health Services Journal*, and analysts are confident that Emap will be able to make cost-savings of up to £1m on the business, which made operating profits of £8.4m last year.

Results for the half year to the end of September were good, with pre-tax profits up 27 per cent to £64.5m. The company is taking advantage of the buoyant economy and falling paper prices by almost doubling its investment in its magazines and radio stations this year to around £14m. Consumer magazines turned in a dazzling performance in the UK, although the French titles suffered on translation because of the strength of sterling and the weaker economy across the Channel.

The second half of the year will see some big new launches like *Red*, a women's magazine which hits the street in the UK in the New Year. There will also be new launches in France. Radio didn't have such a good tale to tell, with advertising growth suffering from management changes. The 10 per cent rise compared with the industry average of 14 per cent.

Despite the strong figures, there are significant question marks over Emap's future. Robin Miller, chief executive, said yesterday that although there would be growth in the second half, it would not be as strong as it had been in the past six months. Paper prices are likely to rise again, and increases in advertising rev-

enue may start to tail off. The other uncertainty is whether Emap will be successful in bidding for IPC, Reed Elsevier's consumer magazine division.

Merrill Lynch says Emap is trading on a price/earnings ratio of 18 for the year to March 1998 on the basis of forecast profits of £158m. That looks cheap compared to its immediate peer group, Reed and Reuters, but it is far enough compared to expected growth in the low teens.

Sterling dents British Steel

British Steel is the ultimate cyclical stock, riding the twin roller-coasters of the economic cycle and the foreign exchange markets. The gyrations it experiences as a result have made the company a dismal long-term investment but a great opportunity for anyone who fancies they have a short-term economic or financial crystal ball.

Although the shares are no higher than they were in 1989, buying at the end of 1992 would have increased your investment five-fold in the following four years.

Profits of £143m for the six months to September were well ahead of expectations although almost halved from last year's £262m, and the shares, now 40 per cent owned by bullish American investors, nudged 3.75p higher to 148.75p in response.

The company had warned six months ago that the full impact of sterling's appreciation had yet to be felt and it was right, only a little less than expected.

Demand for the company's steel is actually pretty buoyant just now, with the car and construction industries in fine fettle – volumes were 4 per cent higher and prices have started to firm in local currency terms.

All the benefit was eroded by the effects of the soaring pound, which has risen by around 30 per cent against the mark over the past two years. Almost all steel in Europe is traded in marks, making British Steel less competitive against European rivals in their markets and more vulnerable to imports at home.

One of the reasons British Steel's shares are so volatile is that small movements in currencies can have a dramatic impact on forecasts. One analyst yesterday halved his estimate for the year to next March from £220m to £400m.

If that is achieved, the company will have weathered the current downturn a lot better than the previous slump in the early 1990s and its big discount to the rest of the market, underpinned by a 6.7 per cent net yield, might look unjustified.

United Biscuits yesterday announced it would gain £241m from an asset swap deal with its arch-rival PepsiCo. As Andrew Verity reports, the deal marks the end of a troubled time for UB which has seen shares underperform the market and lose battles for market share with PepsiCo.

UB said it would return £150m to shareholders no later than July next year after sealing the deal, which, the company says, should also enhance earnings.

Under the terms of the deal, PepsiCo will buy the rights to UB's "Nibbit" snack brand as well as its French snack business and a factory in Veurne, Belgium. UB will in turn buy PepsiCo's French biscuit operation, Biscuiteer Nantaise, which makes France's favourite sandwich biscuit, "le BN".

UB is also selling two Australian subsidiaries which have fallen prey to an antipodean craze for Tazos, a crispbread-style biscuit made by PepsiCo. Both the Original Pretzel Company

and the Smith's Snackfood Company, which are owned by UB, have lost market share because of the popularity of collectable plastic discs placed in Tazo snack packets.

UB said that after the £150m had been returned to shareholders it would use the remaining £91m to reduce borrowings and invest in an unnamed "series of strategic initiatives".

Colin Short, UB's chairman, said: "Today's deal represents a very significant development for UB. It gives us a stronger business platform from which to drive for growth in our international biscuit operations and UK food portfolio."

The deal needs approval from regulators and from the shareholders of UB, who will be called to an extraordinary general meeting "as soon as is practicable".

Despite yesterday's share price rise, UB's equity still remains well below the 300p to 350p level it enjoyed before announcing gloomy results in 1995. It is now aiming to boost its share of the own-brands market, the growth of which in the big supermarkets has hit sales of its branded products.

Shell and BP pump £1bn into Russia

Europe's two biggest oil companies separately announced \$1.7bn (£1bn) of investments in Russia to develop the country's vast oil and gas reserves. The moves are the first by Western oil companies since Russia relaxed restrictions on foreign investment in its oil industry.

The Royal Dutch/Shell Group, the world's biggest international oil company, said it would work with RAO Gazprom and AO Lukoil Holding to consider a bid for RAO Rosneft, the last large remaining state-owned oil company up for sale.

British Petroleum, meanwhile, the world's fifth-largest oil company, said it would pay \$750m for a 10 per cent stake in AO Sidoarjo, Russia's fourth-largest oil company, to tap a giant Siberian gas field.

The announcements come a fortnight after Boris Yeltsin, the Russian President, repeated a law that prevented foreigners from owning more than 15 per cent of a Russian oil company and signal a new confidence among western oil companies in the economic viability of Russian oil projects.

Amoco Corp of the US Chicago and ENI of Italy have expressed interest in such pro-

jects. Exxon Corp, though, is waiting to see whether the government rethinks its decision to cancel the company's bid on a 2 billion-barrel project.

BP will make its investment formal in a signing ceremony at Prime Minister Tony Blair's office today.

Shell is buying \$1bn worth of bonds from RAO Gazprom. It will also join with Gazprom and AO Lukoil Holding to consider a bid for RAO Rosneft, the last large remaining state-owned oil company up for sale.

Russia's lifting restrictions on foreign investment in oil gives

the world's biggest oil companies a freer hand in bidding stakes in state-controlled companies set to be sold in the coming months such as Rosneft, AO Lukoil Holding, AO KomiTEK, AO East Siberian, AO Siberian & Ural Oil & Gas Chemical Co. and AO Norsil-oil. Competition for Rosneft, the 10th largest oil producer in Russia, is heating up even before the Russian government sets the auction conditions. The government wants to promote competition because it wants to get the highest possible price and help plug a gap in the federal budget.

The typical viewer would be a 32-year-old person with a family," he added.

Magic will use the same

format as Emap's existing

music video channel, The Box,

which the company acquired

last year. As a result, the

investment in Magic will be mi-

nimal, as the infrastructure is

already in place.

The Box is transmitted 24

hours a day via cable, and in the

earlier hours via satellite on

GskyB, a joint venture between

Granada and BskyB. Emap said

yesterday the channel was the

most widely viewed music chan-

nel in cable-only households.

The Magic venture follows

news last month that Emap was

considering creating television

programmes based on some of

its well-known magazine brands

Power, and FHM.

Emap yesterday announced

pre-tax profits for the six

months to the end of Septem-

ber of £64.5m, an increase of 27

per cent. That excluded a

£11.5m profit on disposals in

the previous half year. The in-

terim dividend rose 15 per cent

to 4.95p.

– Cathy Newman

IN BRIEF

BSkyB finance director quits

British Sky Broadcasting Group said Richard Brooke had resigned as group finance director, with effect from the end of this month. He will be succeeded by Nick Carrington, who has been chief financial officer since June 1995. Mr Brooke will be taking up the position of managing director of St James's Investment Partnership, which specialises in developing media projects.

Sinclair launches £10.7m bid

Sinclair Montrose launched a recommended £10.7m offer for The Premiere Group. It is offering 22 of its shares for every 20 Premiere, or 11 of its shares and £26.78 in cash or loan notes for every 20 Premiere shares. Premiere achieved pre-tax profits of £670,000 on turnover of £18.39m in the period from 1 May 1 to 31 December 1996. Sinclair said the acquisition would provide opportunities for the enlarged group, enhancing growth of Match's healthcare contract business through Premiere's ability to supply clinical and non-clinical personnel, greater geographic coverage and enhanced margins.

Racial in Saudi radio deal

Racial Electronics has been selected by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Defence and Aviation to supply Panther-V VHF tactical frequency-hopping radios to all Royal Saudi Land Forces. The agreement will see the local manufacture and integration of many thousands of radios into all main land-based platforms operated by the Saudi Land Forces. Racial said it expects this programme to result in orders worth "well in excess of £100m over the next 10 years".

ABF eyes Spillers' mills

Associated British Foods said it was considering buying Spillers milling operations, a part of Dalgety Food Ingredients. ABF has formally approached the Office For Trading for clearance to buy the business. In September, Dalgety announced it intended to sell DFI, which consists of the milling operations and Spillers Consumer Foods. No financial details were given.

C&G ups mortgage rate

Cheltenham & Gloucester said its standard variable mortgage rate will increase by 0.25 percentage points to 8.7 per cent from 20 November for new applicants and 1 December for established borrowers. The interest rate on C&G's Instant Transfer Account will increase on 1 December by the same amount to 7.25 per cent gross per annum on all balances.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Adam & Harvey (1)	22.5m (24.2m)	2.48m (2.55m)	32.8p (34.8p)	13.5p (12.25p)
British Steel (1)	3.40bn (3.65bn)	14.8m (28.2m)	4.74p (8.85p)	3.0p (0.0p)
Diplomat (F)	257.5m (223.8m)	21.0m (23.5m)	24.5p (27.0p)	14.5p (14.5p)
Emap (1)	378.1m (361.7m)	64.8m (60.6m)	20.4p (16.0p)	4.95p (4.30p)
Finsbury (F)	363.4m (246.8m)	30.5m (23.5m)	7.5p (6.4p)	2.5p
Globe Group (1)	56.05m (55.60m)	3.72m (3.36m)	5.1p (5.0p)	1

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**OUTLOOK
ON THE BANKING
CRISIS IN JAPAN
AND THE ARGUMENT
OVER AIRBUS
LAUNCH AID
FOR BAe**

It could only happen in Japan. Far from causing another precipitous plunge in the Tokyo stock market, the first ever post-war collapse of a major Japanese commercial bank was greeted with unrestrained glee yesterday, with the Nikkei rebounding a full 8 per cent. While this might seem a curiously perverse reaction to a cataclysmic event, it is not altogether without reason. If the Japanese authorities are prepared for the first time to allow a big bank to go to the wall, then that means they have so undermined confidence in the system, they believe that even if the bankruptcy is followed in short order by others, the damage to Japan's economy would be limited.

Furthermore, the insolence seemed to be dealt with in a thoroughly business-like and calming manner. The Bank of Japan stands ready to provide loans that will enable depositors in Hokkaido Takushoku Bank to get their money back, while the Bank's non-performing loans are to be taken over by the Deposit Insurance Corporation, a Government-backed fund that will work the loans out over a period of time. All very satisfactory.

The trouble is that from a Western point of view it is hard to see how anything has really changed. Is this not just more smoke and mirrors from the Japanese authorities? Finally a Japanese bank has been prepared to admit what everyone has known for years, that it is insolvent. We have now entered the next stage of this great Japanese illusion, that it is possible to have a painless insolvency.

If the Nikkei sinks below the 15,000 level, then the system moves into melt-down

territory. Holdings of Japanese equities provide an important part of the reserves of all Japanese banks. At 15,000 and below, liabilities begin seriously to exceed legal reserve limits, there would be a loss of confidence, and the cost of propping up the banks might become prohibitive. Already there is worrying evidence of this spectre in the rising cost of the "Japan premium", the premium over the norm which Japanese banks have to pay for international money.

While the process of bankruptcy is confined to just a few players, it may just about be possible to pull off this slight of hand. But if there is a more serious spill over into the Japanese financial system, then the illusion becomes much more difficult to maintain. At this stage, the Japanese authorities can get away with the pretence that no public money is being applied to the ball out. That would plainly not be possible if the process began to snowball. The chances of this happening are out as remote as might be hoped. Any use of Government money could prove unacceptable to the Japanese electorate.

Without much more positive action by the Japanese Government than we have seen so far to stimulate the Japanese economy there is no reason to suppose that the present bounce in the Nikkei is any more than temporary (for the reverse view see Hamish McRae on page 23). Psychologically, the Japanese Government is already in that phase of thinking where the last thing it wants to do is provide a new fiscal stimulus. It is to rebuild the public finances mode, cut slash taxes frame of mind. That in turn is going to put further pressure on Japan's beleaguered banks. The ruling LDP party has proposed some use of public money to recapitalise the banking sector through the issue of a new class of preference share, but the timing of this assistance is in the lap of the gods. It could be years away. The need is more urgent.

If the Nikkei sinks below the 15,000 level, then the system moves into melt-down

territory. Holdings of Japanese equities provide an important part of the reserves of all Japanese banks. At 15,000 and below, liabilities begin seriously to exceed legal reserve limits, there would be a loss of confidence, and the cost of propping up the banks might become prohibitive. Already there is worrying evidence of this spectre in the rising cost of the "Japan premium", the premium over the norm which Japanese banks have to pay for international money.

So are there no solutions? There are two possible avenues of escape, both hinted at by Larry Summers, the US Deputy Treasury Secretary, during trade talks in Japan over the past few days. The first is the possibility of an international lifeboat for the region's ailing banking system. If this were seriously to be offered, there would have to be a quid pro quo, which would be measures to resuscitate the Japanese economy and strengthen the yen. Neither of these two options would have seemed possible even three months ago, but the political will may now be there.

It is a measure of the seriousness of the region's economic plight that Mr Summers now gains a hearing for measures like these. The addition of Korea to the region's list of casualties has underlined the extreme dangers of the present crisis. Even Korea has entered the game of competitive devaluation. With economic growth across the region in full retreat, deflation and protectionism may yet be far behind. Certainly some form of coordinated international action has become a matter

of urgency. It is still all too easy to think of the financial crisis of the Far East as somebody else's problem. Perhaps unfortunately, the world just isn't like that any more. The Far East's difficulties are all too quickly likely to become our own.

**Why BAe should
get launch aid**

In an interesting twist to the old adage about carts and horses, Whitehall looks like it is about to put the horse before the cart by granting launch aid for the engine that will pull the new Airbus jet but not for the aircraft itself.

Rolls-Royce was handed £200m in launch investment last week to go away and build a new Trent engine to power the stretched Airbus A340. But just when British Aerospace thought it was about to get a similar handout to make the wings, the Paymaster General, Geoffrey Robinson, appears to have dug his heels in.

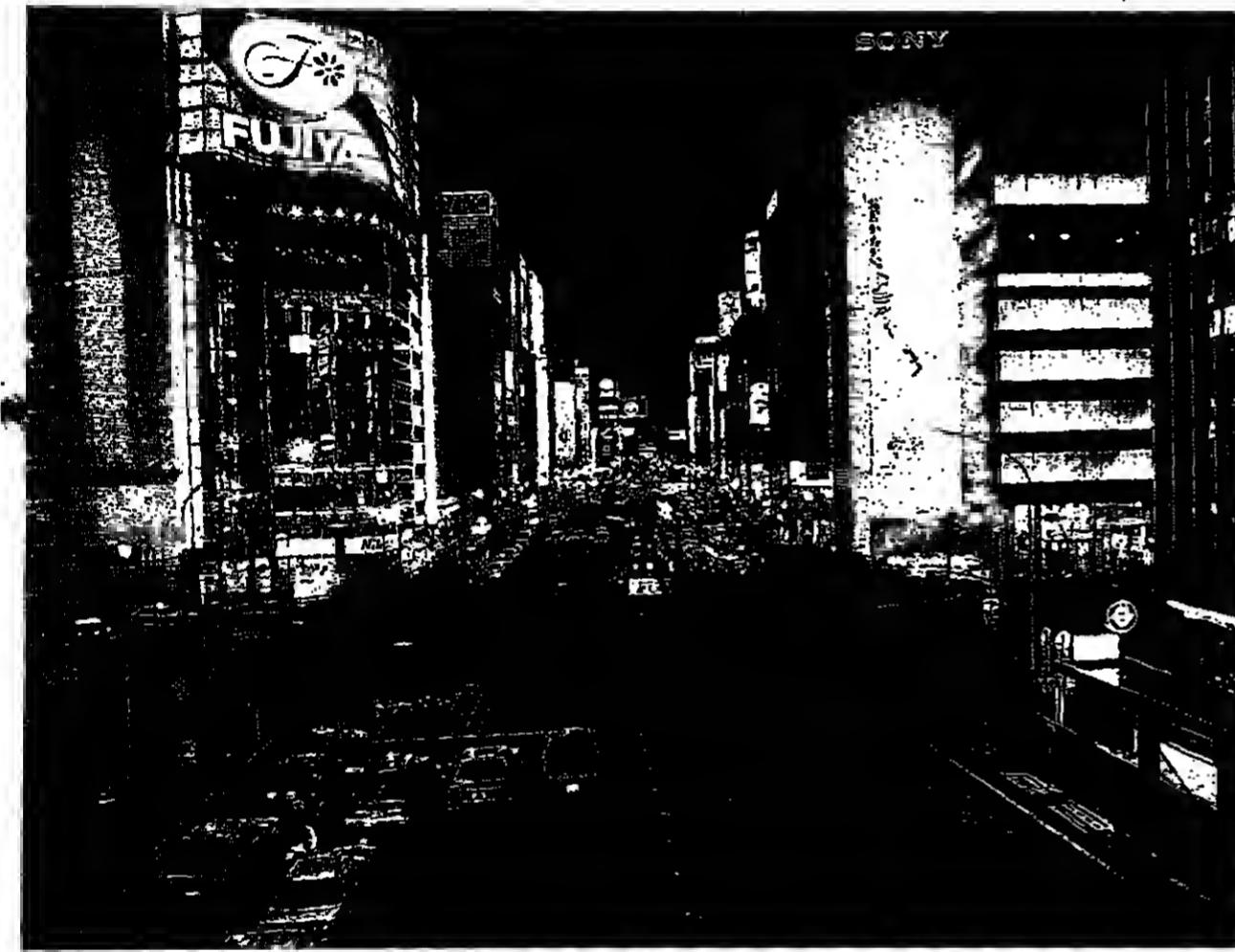
Things are sticky enough in Dubai at the best of times. When this piece of unwelcome news filtered through to BAe executives attending the local air show yesterday the response was a collective outbreak of cold sweats. A lot of taxpayers' money is at stake here - the BAe and Rolls-Royce aid applications together come to £120m. Nor is BAe noticeably short of cash with a £10bn order book and the drip feed of the Al Yamamah arms for nil project with the Saudis to keep it ticking over for the next decade.

Yet it would appear odd to back the engines and not the airframe when the Government has already satisfied itself that it will get a commercial return from the stretched A340 programme. It would seem all the odder when the Germans and French are backing the programme and when the four partner governments in Airbus are jockeying to put their respective industrial partners in the driving seat when the consortium is turned into a commercial entity in 1999.

It is always possible that this is a last minute piece of brinkmanship on the part of the Government designed to extract a better deal for the taxpayer. It is always possible that BAe has played its hand badly by making it obvious that the new Airbus would go ahead whether it received launch aid or not - the trap that Rolls-Royce fell into when it asked for and was refused aid for the original Trent programme.

It is always possible that BAe's threat to stick and build the wings on the Continent is a hollow one. Given BAe's existing Airbus investments in the UK and its highly trained workforce here, this could prove a highly costly fit of pie, dwarfing the size of the launch aid BAe is trying to extract. All the same, this is an odd way for the natural party of business to go about cementing its own-found friendships.

The Government should cough up the money and he done. If this is such a sure-win commercial proposition as the Government suggests, then it will get its money back in spades anyway.



Tokyo in turmoil: A willingness to let an unhealthy bank go under appears to have reassured the markets

Japanese stocks rally despite collapse of country's tenth biggest bank

During a remarkable day in Tokyo yesterday, the stock exchange scored one of its biggest ever gains, just hours after seemingly catastrophic news: the long-awaited collapse of the country's tenth biggest bank. Richard Lloyd Parry reports from Tokyo.

The Nikkei average of 225 leading shares rose by 1,200 points or 8 per cent, to close at 16,283, the fourth largest percentage increase in its history. Remarkably, yesterday's rise followed the morning announcement that Hokkaido Takushoku Bank was to become the first Japanese commercial bank to ever to go into full-blown collapse.

On Friday, after a traumatic month which saw currencies and stock markets plunge around Asia, the Nikkei index had sunk below the 15,000 barrier, and yesterday's unexpected surge appeared to reflect confidence that after years of irresolution, the problem of bad debts in Japan's banking system was finally being addressed. Hiroshi Mizusaka, the Finance Minister, announced yesterday that the Bank of Japan would provide special loans to cover withdrawals by Hokkaido Takushoku depositors, and hinted that public funds may also be drawn upon. The bank's non-

performing loans will be bought out by the Deposit Insurance Corporation, a government-backed fund. This combination of support for individual depositors coupled with a willingness to let an unhealthy bank go under appears to have reassured the markets that the government is serious about financial reform while keeping casualties to a minimum. "Today's step underscores that the authorities are prepared to let capitalism work," said Jesper Koll, the chief economist of J P Morgan in Japan. "The previous Japanese doctrine of 'too small to fail' has been abandoned and full-blown consolidation is now under way".

Until two years ago, Japanese financial institutions operated in a highly regulated and protected environment under the wing of the powerful Ministry of Finance, which has traditionally propped up ailing banks. Recently however, in an attempt to recover from a lingering slump, the Japanese government has promised to open up the financial markets

to new competition and become less tolerant of lame ducks. Since 1995 three regional banks and several credit unions have gone under. Hokkaido Takushoku (also known as Hokutakku) is the first of the 20 big "city" banks to fall, and analysts in Tokyo predicted yesterday that it would not be the last.

Japanese banks declared problem loans worth 27.9 trillion yen (£132bn) at the end of March, but independently reckonings put the true total much higher. Serious problems could arise if the liabilities of busted banks exceed the capacity of the Deposit Insurance Corporation, which was set up to protect depositors and maintain confidence. Yesterday, the US deputy treasury secretary, Lawrence Summers, urged the government to use public money to bail out lenders. But the use of public funds to save ill-managed institutions has proved disastrously unpopular in the past, and the political risks are high.

Hokkaido Takushoku, based

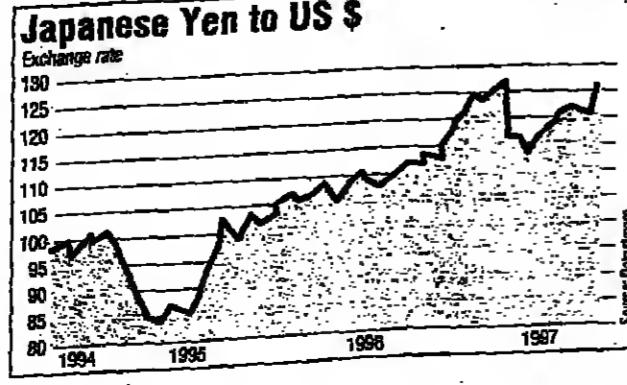
in Sapporo on the northern island of Hokkaido, was known to have been ailing for months, and in August, it closed most of its overseas operations. Last month it postponed a planned merger with another Hokkaido-based bank after disagreements over how to handle its burden of bad debts, which were known to total ¥935bn at the end of March.

"In addition to lower credit ratings and weak stock prices, which reflected recent worries about the creditworthiness of our bank, the recent collapse of financial firms has made it increasingly difficult for us to raise money in the short-term money market," the bank said in a statement yesterday. "We had to reach a judgement that we would not be able to continue our operations."

The failure will no doubt mean an increase in the so-called "Japan premium", the mark up on borrowing which Japanese banks face on the international market. Yesterday morning, three-month Eurodollar loans in the interbank money market in London were costing Japanese institutions 0.46 per cent higher than European and US banks.

In Hokkaido, the day-to-day operations of Hokutakku will be taken over by North Pacific Bank. Among the victims of the failure will be a tie-up with Barclays Bank which agreed last June jointly to develop new financial products with Hokutakku.

Hamish McRae, page 23



Hong Kong gains breathing space but Korea suffers further

The surge in the Japanese stock market yesterday gave a fillip to other Asian markets, particularly Hong Kong. However, Stephen Vines in Hong Kong reports that Tokyo's rise failed to help neighbouring South Korea avoid share price and currency falls.

The blue chip Hang Seng Index in Hong Kong rose 4.6 per cent on the good news from Tokyo and on hopes that high

interest rates were set to ease. Miles Rimington, from Crosby Securities, said that traders saw what was happening in Tokyo and were mindful of Friday's rise in Wall Street, ensuring that there was "certainly going to be a positive feeling".

No one is expressing unqualified optimism but market-makers have noted that the recent slump in share prices has been broken by three days of solid gains, taking the stock market up 8.45 per cent.

With the Hang Seng Index now at 10,419, comfortably above the 10,000 level, there is hope that it might test 11,000

which could be spurred by a favourable outcome to a three-day "financial summit" now under way in the Chinese capital, where senior leaders are discussing financial reforms.

As usual the Chinese authorities are not forthcoming about the agenda but it is believed that discussions will focus on urgently needed reform of the banking sector, which, by and large, is technically bankrupt.

Estimates of the level of bad debt vary but it seems that some 13 per cent of loans are non-performing. The challenge for the Chinese leadership is to

turn the banks into commercial institutions operating on recognised lending criteria.

Meanwhile in South Korea the central bank has put immense pressure on the government to consider economic reform by suddenly withdrawing its effort to prevent the further devaluation of the currency.

Having declared that it was holding a "Maginot Line" to keep the Korean won below an exchange rate of 1,000 to the US dollar, the bank said yesterday it would no longer intervene in the money markets. The won promptly slipped to a historic low of 1008.6.

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Storm clouds retreat but thin trading makes for an unreal surge

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

Equities enjoyed their best day for seven weeks as the Far and Middle Eastern storm clouds suddenly looked less threatening. With New York responding, Footsie staged a 125.2 points advance to 4,867.

Turnover, however, was once again thin. Whether the lack of trading was another indictment of order-driven trading or represented overall uncertainty was not clear.

Volume, at 584.9 million, was not much above the stock market's alleged break-even level and some described Footsie's heady progress as one of the most unreal surges ever experienced.

It was very much a blue chips party. The supporting Midcap shares experienced little more than a nodding acquaintance with the advance and down among the little 'uns' euphoria was conspicuous by its

absence with the FTSE Small-Cap index managing a token 1.5 points gain to 2,281.

Financials, a major force in this year's Footsie gallop, were in the forefront, excited by renewed speculation of a Barclays assault on National Westminster Bank. Barclays rose 30p to 1,490p and NatWest 15.5p to 870.5p. Talk that Deutsche Morgan Grenfell could be about to clinch a deal with UBS, expected to make a statement on Friday, added to the excitement.

Among insurers, where there is an almost ceaseless flow of bid speculation, it was the turn of Sun Life & Provincial to lead the charge with a 25p advance to 388p. Commercial Union and General Accident joined the fun.

Norwich Union, still the favourite insurer to encounter bid activity, shrugged off a neg-

ative Credit Lyonnais Laing circular, ending 2p higher at 366.5p. At one time the shares were down 3.5p. The securities house estimated Norwich's theoretical take-out value at 330p and said the shares stand at a premium to sensible bid valuations.

Barclays and Lloyds TSB have been named as possible Norwich predators. Former building society Halifax is another in the frame.

The more settled Far East atmosphere had the predictably soothing influence on HSBC, up 61p to 1,477p, and Standard Chartered, 20p to 642p. The Hong Kong market recovered 4.6 per cent after shares in Tokyo had responded to Japanese government action over a troubled banking operation.

Excitement erupted on the oil pitch despite lower crude

prices as Iraqi tension eased.

British Petroleum and Shell are getting more deeply involved with the Russians, with BP, up 36p to 874p, splashing out \$750m buying 10 per cent of Sidoarjo, Russia's fourth largest integrated oil group, and acquiring an interest in an associate company.

Shell, 17.5p higher at 418.5p, is investing \$1bn in

RAO Gazprom, the largest Russian group which accounts for 20 per cent of the world's gas reserves.

Bid favourite United Biscuits hardened 25.5p to 219.5p following its reluctant, even belated, withdrawal from its Australia and European biscuits build-up. UB collects \$410m from the US giant PepsiCo and plans to return £150m to shareholders.

Premiere have accepted.

Marks & Spencer added

18p to 60p. Panmure Gordon forecast it will enjoy a role as a "global retailer" and has put a 700p target on the shares.

Tullow Oil remained in de-

mmand on a mixture of takeover

and exploration hopes.

The group has developments in

Pakistan

and is among com-

panies waiting for licensing re-

sults in Bangladesh.

Care First rose 5p to

158.5p. The possibility of a US

bid was confirmed by venture

capital fund Warburg Pincus

Bopa, which bid 150p last

week, let it be known its offer

may not be its final shot.

Premiere, a jobs agency, fell

9.5p to 215p as Sinclair Mon-

trose emerged with a near all-

paper offer. With Sinclair

sharp and Andrew Burnett

say although the hotel market

is at its strongest since the

late 1980s Thistle has a

sizeable exposure to some of

the least favourable

segments. They see profits of

£78.5m this year and £83m

next.

Brierley has 46 per cent

of the capital.

Save, the old Frost group,

seems to be bidding to

become the market's

favourite takeover stock. The

story of a bid was going the

rounds again yesterday with

the shares firm at 101p. An

oil major is the favourite to

bounce.

TAKING STOCK

Thistle Hotels, where there is talk that a major shareholder, Brierley Investments, is decided unsent by the weak share price, held at 153.5p.

Charterhouse Tinney rates the shares, floated at 170p last year, a sell. Analyst Melanie Sharp and Andrew Burnett say although the hotel market is at its strongest since the late 1980s Thistle has a sizeable exposure to some of the least favourable segments. They see profits of £78.5m this year and £83m next.

Marks & Spencer added

18p to 60p. Panmure Gordon forecast it will enjoy a role as a "global retailer" and has put a 700p target on the shares.

Associated British Foods, seeking Whitehall approval to bid for Dalgety's milling operation, rose 19p to 559p; Dalgety hardened 6.5p to 247.5p. There was talk that UB, short of its Australian snack food excursion, could attract cash-rich ABE.

Care First rose 5p to 158.5p. The possibility of a US bid was confirmed by venture capital fund Warburg Pincus Bopa, which bid 150p last

Tullow Oil remained in demand on a mixture of takeover

and exploration hopes. The group has developments in

Pakistan and is among com-

panies waiting for licensing re-

sults in Bangladesh.

BAA, the airports group, rose 7p to 501p. Daimler, regard

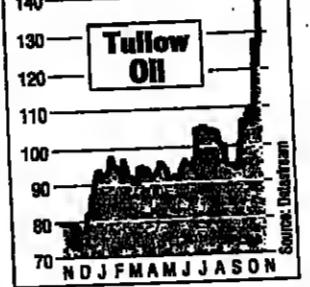
the shares as a short-term sell.

In Japan that the

HAMISH MERRAE
INTERVIEW

Share spotlight

share price, pence



NDJ FMAMJJASON

Share Price Data

When are we starting except where stated. The yield is the latest twelve months' declared gross dividend as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding extraordinary items but including dividends. Other details: Ex rights & Dividends; P Dividends; Suspended; P Parity Paid Up; AMM. GIC Prices are Bloomberg Currents.

Source: Bloomberg

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899 calls cost 5p per minute.

In Japan's darkest hour, signs that the worst may be over



**HAMISH
MCRAE
ON THE BULL
CASE FOR A
BATTERED
ECONOMY**

The moment when things look truly dreadful usually proves to be the turning point – just as the moment when the future looks most rosy is the moment to sell. Since everyone at the moment is so convinced that the Japanese bear market has further to run, dedicated contrarians ought at least to be considering that this is the moment to plunge back in. Absurd? Maybe. At least, too early? Quite possibly. But let's look at the full case.

It is easier to start by thinking in terms of the economy rather than the share market, for two reasons. First, the particular characteristics of the Japanese equity market, with its large cross-holdings and hence relatively small proportion of stock that can be traded mean that it is particularly vulnerable to mood swings. And second, because the market has been so manipulated by the authorities during the first half of the 1990s – being artificially propped by the so-called “price keeping operation” – it might be some time before an economic recovery is reflected in share prices.

Start with the bad news. If you look at the economy, the second quarter of this year was catastrophe-ville. It is not often

that the GDP of a developed economy declines at an annual rate of 1.1 per cent, but the Japanese one managed that in the second quarter. The culprit was a collapse in private consumption, down at annual rate of 21 per cent, in response to the rise in the sales tax. You can catch a feel for the scale of the disaster by looking at the first graph, showing registrations of new cars. These had been slowly recovering from the recession in 1994 and surged at the end of last year in anticipation of the rise in the tax. Then they fell off the cliff.

Inevitably this collapse in consumer demand has hit industrial production. We tend to forget that the Japanese manufacturers are much more dependent on the home market than ours: only 9 per cent of GDP is exported, against 28 per cent here. Until the beginning of this year manufacturing has been recovering nicely (middle graph). True, it was still below the peak of 1990, and if anyone had suggested in 1990 that industrial production seven years later would be no higher, it would have been dismissed as absurd. Still, cover the left-hand side of the graph with your hand and it doesn't look bad at all. But now it is starting to nudge back down again, largely in response to domestic weakness.

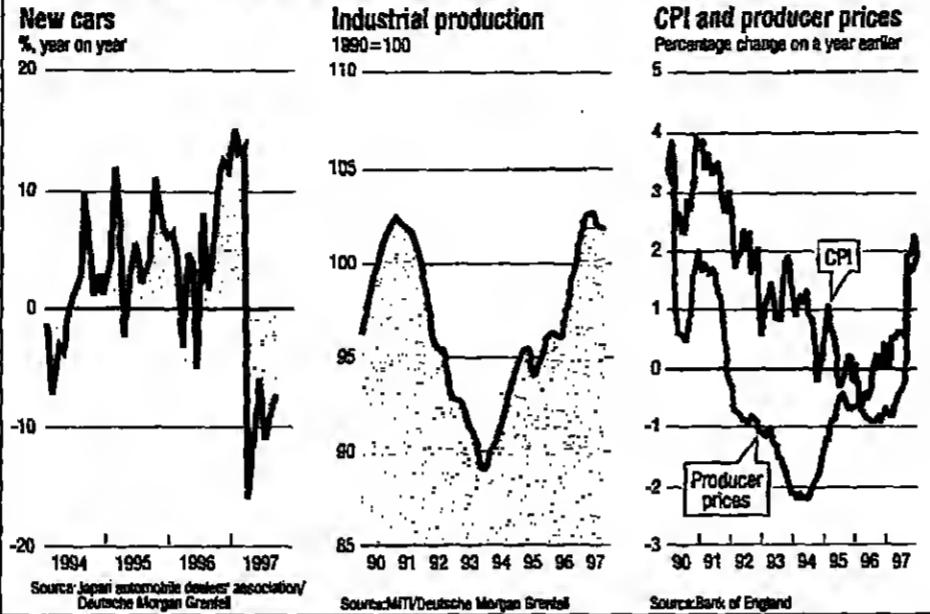
So why, after this build-up, is there a case that the worst is over? Here are four reasons. First and most important, the period of price destruction – that expression which describes the process where Japanese companies were having to sell their products at ever-lower prices – may be over.

The graph on the right shows consumption rising at an annual rate of between 2 and 3 per cent through next year; nothing special but at least the sign is positive rather than negative.

Third, it looks as though the yen will continue to weaken. Do not expect this to have a material impact on the volume of exports, which will in any case be depressed by the chaos in East Asia. But it will help export profitability, and the sight of more profitable companies will boost corporate confidence, and in turn market confidence.

For nearly two decades Japanese companies have sold investors the fine that profits are unimportant and growth is what matters. Capital was too cheap,

Japan: Two downs and an up



Source: Japan Automobile Dealers Association / Deutsche Morgan Grenfell

Source: MITI / Deutsche Morgan Grenfell

Source: Bank of England

dead-weight of debt on the books of both companies and banks, a little inflation is a very helpful thing, for it reduces the real size of the debt. Provided nominal rates do not rise in response, it also reduces real interest rates. A little inflation therefore is exactly what Japan needs.

Second, the collapse of demand in the second quarter ought to be a one-off affair. Deutsche Bank is now forecasting consumption rising at an annual rate of between 2 and 3 per cent through next year; nothing special but at least the sign is positive rather than negative.

Third, it looks as though the yen will continue to weaken. Do not expect this to have a material impact on the volume of exports, which will in any case be depressed by the chaos in East Asia. But it will help export profitability, and the sight of more profitable companies will boost corporate confidence, and in turn market confidence.

For nearly two decades Japanese companies have sold investors the fine that profits are unimportant and growth is what matters. Capital was too cheap,

ing reforms designed to appeal to foreigners but a deep-seated culture of reform, which recognises past failure.

It is very difficult, if you have an apparently successful economic model, to recognise that its run of success has come to an end. But until you do, all reforms are going to be half-hearted, dealing with symptoms rather than the underlying weakness. Back in the 1950s Japan experienced a period of dreadful labour unrest, similar to the trouble in Britain in the 1970s. This resulted in the co-operative model which drove Japan's commercial renaissance, just as the (very different) response to the British disease set in train the economic recovery in this country. I don't think that Japan Inc is quite ready yet to confront its failure, but many people within Tokyo are certainly ready to do so. Eventually they will put the argument.

This may all be too early. Conventional wisdom is that the market is trying to tell us something more. I think it is trying to tell us that the political consensus in Tokyo is shifting towards reform: not just window-dressing

Diamond gleefully proclaimed, hugging the child warmly. But the best question came from the boy who asked: “If you're chief executive, how come you look so young?” The challenge of revitalising Barclays Capital after the sale of BZW's equities and corporate finance businesses is plainly agreeing with Mr Diamond.

Robin Ellison, a partner with the law firm Ever-sheds, has been reported to the police by his local council for criminal damage, after he was allegedly seen painting over double yellow lines outside his home in Hampstead, London.

The strange incident happened last month during a legal dispute between Camden Council and Mr Ellison, according to *The Lawyer* magazine. The council wants to use the land as an access point for six units of “affordable housing”.

A council employee, who was passing by, claims she saw a man fitting Mr Ellison's description, wearing jeans and a woolly jumper, brushing black paint over the double yellow lines at the crack of dawn.

Earlier, according to Camden Council, Mr Ellison had erected bollards on the land, claiming it was his.

When the Council tried to remove them he took out an *ex parte* injunction. The injunction was overturned, and earlier this month he discontinued his claim to prove ownership of the land a week before the trial. Mr Ellison agreed to pay the council's costs.

Mr Ellison was unavailable for comment yesterday.

John Rudgard has selected Michael Hughes, formerly of Guinness, to succeed him next January as chief executive of Bulmers, the cider maker which Mr Rudgard has served for the last 33 years.

“I'm standing down at my own request. I've been chief executive for the last 10 years and I think it's time to hand over to a younger man,” Mr Rudgard said yesterday.

When he retires next year at the age of 58 Mr Rudgard will carry on with the usual mix of non-executive directorships and private investments common to senior businessmen. He will also devote more time to his one-ton sailing boat, called the *Ishiohontire*.

“It got its name because the only thing my wife and I argue about is the temperature inside our house,” says Mr Rudgard.

British Steel may be the highest yielding stock in the Footsie but there is one group of investors who don't seem to care that the shares have gone nowhere in the last 10 years. US investors now own 40 per cent of the company, having more than doubled their shareholdings in the last 11 months, oblivious to the meltdown in profits.

To thank them for their unstinting support, the British Steel chairman Sir Brian Mifflin last night flew out to New York to host a slap-up dinner, organised by Goldman Sachs and the Twenty One Club.

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

JOHN WILLCOCK



A nice young man called Jim O'Donnell is preparing to become a priest in the Roman Catholic Church. Nothing remarkable in that, you might say. Except that Mr O'Donnell is chief executive officer of HSBC James Capel in London and chief executive officer and president of HSBC Markets in New York.

Described by colleagues as “a very rich young man”, Mr O'Donnell, 36, worked at NatWest before joining HSBC, where he has worked in his present transatlantic role for the last three years. The native New Yorker will give up control of the UK equities division this month and finally leave the bank in New York next summer.

His boss, Bernard Asher, says he wanted to inform staff of Mr O'Donnell's decision to leave the bank immediately rather than letting it leak out slowly. Mr Asher said: “He's been thinking about it for a considerable period. Its touching to see someone with such talents look like this.

No successor has been selected yet, so Mr O'Donnell's deputy, Krishna Patel, will take over his responsibilities in the interim.

Speaking of leading City figures with vocations, it is a little known fact about Bob Diamond, chief executive of Barclays Capital (the investment banking division of the Barclays Group), that he was once a teacher. Mr Diamond fully intends to return to the groves of academe when he's finally had enough of the high stress world of capital markets.

So he was in his element yesterday showing a party of children from King Alfred's School in North London around the trading floor at Barclays Capital, Canary Wharf.

“Your telephone bill must be very large,” said one child on being told that part of the function of a trader is to burn the telephone line 24 hours a day to his counterparts in Tokyo, New York and Hong Kong.

Another asked for advice on how to invest his pocket money. “A potential client.” Mr

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Sterling	1 month	3 months	D-Mark	Dollar	1 month	3 months	Spot	1 month	3 months
UK	10000	24.69	24.19	0.5980	0.5651	0.5835	0.5410	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268
Australia	2.0765	2.0765	2.0765	1.4298	1.4298	1.4294	1.4294	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268
Austria	20.834	20.801	20.833	1.2983	1.2971	1.2971	1.2971	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268
Belgium	52.472	52.472	52.472	3.2055	3.2055	3.2055	3.2055	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268
Denmark	12.934	12.934	12.934	1.1444	1.1444	1.1444	1.1444	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268
ECU	14.809	14.796	14.700	1.1427	1.1427	1.1427	1.1427	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268
Finland	8.034	8.034	8.034	0.8845	0.8845	0.8845	0.8845	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268
France	8.82	8.789	8.725	0.8803	0.8731	0.8774	0.8729	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268
Germany	23.825	23.825	23.825	1.7239	1.7239	1.7237	1.7237	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268
Greece	46.015	46.193	46.193	2.7704	2.7704	2.7579	2.7579	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268
Hong Kong	12.925	12.925	12.925	1.2465	1.2465	1.2465	1.2465	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268
Italy	26.717	26.993	26.993	1.1505	1.1505	1.1528	1.1528	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268
Japan	22.423	21.211	20.847	1.2535	1.2535	1.2535	1.2535	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268
Mexico	3.526	3.526	3.526	0.8874	0.8874	0.8874	0.8874	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268
Netherlands	3.005	3.005	3.005	1.9531	1.9531	1.9531	1.9531	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268
New Zealand	2.816	2.816	2.816	1.9525	1.9525	1.9525	1.9525	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268
Norway	7.163	7.163	7.163	1.2577	1.2577	1.2577	1.2577	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268
Portugal	6.522	6.522	6.522	1.2465	1.2465	1.2465	1.2465	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268
Saudi Arabia	63.465	63.401	63.401	3.7505	3.7505	3.7505	3.7505	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268
Singapore	25.760	26.707	26.707	1.2535	1.2535	1.2535	1.2535	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268
South Africa	8.000	8.000	8.000	1.2535	1.2535	1.2535	1.2535	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268
Spain	26.741	26.917	26.917	1.2535	1.2535	1.2535	1.2535	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268
Sweden	12.771	12.760	12.760	1.7239	1.7239	1.7239	1.7239	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268
Switzerland	2.366	2.374	2.374	1.9531	1.9531	1.9531	1.9531	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268
US	10.822	10.822	10.822	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268	1.0268

Other Spot Rates

||
||
||

SPECIAL REPORT

Feelgood factor pushes British air fares to new high



Where are the Hockney paintings? Business travellers now expect much more for their money

An economic upturn has fuelled demand for constantly-improving levels of service. Businessmen themselves are delighted - which is more than can be said for their company accountants.

If you go down to the Executive Lounge at Heathrow Terminal Four today, you will find a couple of David Hockney originals decorating the north wall. These are not just intended to brighten up the place;

they are for sale, at £28,000 and £34,000 respectively. When you consider that this is not the First Class or Concorde Lounge, but the venue for mainstream business travellers, it becomes clear that the airlines feel that business travel from Britain is awash with a feelgood factor and hard cash.

On the opening day of the World Travel Market in Earls Court, London, yesterday, leading travel industry figures were painting a glowing picture of prospects in the near future. This kind of confidence from suppliers can be disconcerting if you are a consumer.

"Historically, UK has had

some of the lowest fares in Europe," says Kyle Davis, head of purchasing management for American Express. "That difference has been eliminated."

In the past two years, busi-

ness air fares have risen more

rapidly in Britain than in any other European country, according

to the Amex quarterly survey.

Transatlantic fares have risen 22

per cent in two years, with an

other 12 per cent rise expected

for the coming year. Recent eco-

nomic jitters in Asia are not ex-

pected to attenuate increases for

eastbound routes, either: a year

from now, says Mr Davis, fares could rise 14 per cent.

On the supply side, one rea-

son for the increase is the cost

of providing higher quality.

The battles to provide the

greatest amount of legroom,

the most comfortable seats or the

swishiest arrival lounge facilities

have cost the airlines a fortune,

and someone has to pay -

which is perhaps why the more

relaxed and refreshed that busi-

ness travellers appear, the less

comfortable are company ac-

countants.

The key to increased costs,

though, is demand. Just as busi-

ness travel retreats rapidly in a

downturn, in a confident eco-

nomic mood the amount of activi-

ty increases fiercely. Capacity

- whether in top-class hotels, ur-

in business-class on aircraft de-

parting Heathrow - is con-

strained, and as in any market

the price rises accordingly.

It wasn't supposed to be like

this, at least within Europe. This

spring, full "cabotage" took ef-

fect in the European Union. The

man responsible, Transport Com-

mmissioner Neil Kinnock, told me what

this means in principle: "Civil

aviation carriers whose busi-

nesses are based in the European

Union, will have the right to

trade anywhere in the Union,

stopping off in as many places as

they want to regardless of na-

tional boundaries."

In practice, though, the ef-

fect for the business traveller

has been strictly marginal. An

Irish airline, Ryanair, now flies

from Stansted in Essex to a cou-

ple of obscure airports in Swe-

den and Norway, which it labels

"Stockholm South" and "Oslo

South" respectively. A pair of

entrepreneurs from southern

Europe are opening up Luton

as a cut-price gateway. British

Airways itself announced yes-

terday that it planned to launch

its own no-frills airline offering

cheap fares to Europe.

But what hinders the plans

of Stelios Haji-Ioannou of easy

Jet and Franco Mancassolo of

Debonair is that Heathrow and

Gatwick are the first choices for

most business travellers. These

two airports have achieved the

critical mass that permits fre-

quent services: if you miss the

Heathrow departure to JFK,

there will be another one along

in an hour - if not sooner.

There's a good chance that

the aircraft you fly on will be op-

erated by American Airlines or

British Airways. But the alliance

which both are keen to form is

still stacking over Brussels,

waiting for the congestion of

competition legislation to clear.

Meanwhile the Star Alliance is

up and flying, with business trav-

ellers able to benefit from

through check-in and easy

transfers on some of the world's

from Britain's
to Europe's
airport has never
been so busy. From June,
Heathrow Express
will be the
new normal.
Meanwhile, says
the Hea

leading airlines, including
Lufthansa and United Airlines.

Virgin Atlantic is proving

promiscuous having just got out

of bed with Delta on its transat-

lantic code-shares, it is now

snuggling up to Continental

Airlines - while maintaining its

long-standing relationship with

Malaysia Airlines.

Some time before the end of

the year, these flights will be

come easier to catch for people

travelling from Central London.

The first stage of the Heathrow

Express starts running soon,

presaging the 15-minute jour-

ney from Paddington that is

planned for next June. As the

survey of links to the airport

shows (opposite), the new ser-

vice cannot begin soon enough.

What happens, though, when

you get there? As the parties in-

volved in the longest-running

planning inquiry in history know

all too well, Heathrow is running

at full capacity and a fifth ter-

minus - if agreed - will not be

operating until some years into

the next millennium. Yet, as Neil

Taylor argues on page 27,

Britain's business travellers are

overlooking the increasing op-

portunities to fly from local air-

ports that are presently showing

an embarrassing amount of spare capacity.

The third London "airport",

meanwhile, is looking increas-

ingly like Waterloo Interna-

tional. On 14 December,

Eurostar services from London

to Brussels accelerate by half an

hour. This should mean that

services to the Belgian capital,

so long the poor relation to

Paris, become much more attrac-

tive to the business trav-

eller. And to the company

accountant, too, if you fol-

low Sue

Wheat's advice

un page 26 for

a cheap, cheerful yet business-

like sojourn in Brussels.

Most "proper" business ho-

tels are reaping the rewards of

the economic upswing, charg-

ing high rates for increasingly

sophisticated levels of service.

Some travellers, though, re-

gret the increasing homogenisa-

tion of the business hotel; on

page 26, Rhiannon Batten of

fers more bohemian alterna-

tives to Europe's premier

business city, London.

You cannot, for the foreseeable

future, pay for your Lon-

don hotel with the euro. While

politicians hicker about Britain's

participation, transaction costs

continue to add considerably to

the cost of doing business

abroad. David Watts suggests

(opposite) how plastic can take

some of the strain.

The first opportunity that

many British business travellers

will have to use the euro will be

on the Heathrow Express, a de-

velopment that shows the fore-

25/BUSINESS TRAVEL

The Heathrow Express will be along next year. But for now ...

Getting from Britain's biggest city to Europe's busiest airport has never been easy. From June, the Heathrow Express should simplify matters. In the meantime, says Simon Calder, the competitors for least-bad way to Heathrow are many and various.

So you think you know your airport codes, from ABZ (Aberdeen) via LHR (Heathrow) to ZAG (Zagreb)? OK, then, identify QQP.

The trick in this question is that QQP is not an airport at all, but a railway station - Paddington, London W2, to be precise. But from next June, the code will begin to appear on air tickets. The shortest "flight" possible from Heathrow airport should be the 15-minute connection to central London. Within a year of the start-up, through check-in of baggage will be a reality, and QQP to YYZ (Paddington to Toronto) should be a cinch.

The Heathrow Express link is basically a case of Britain's biggest airport catching up with the rest of the Europe. From Gatwick and Manchester to Frankfurt and Zurich, high-speed rail links are *de rigueur* for any self-respecting airport.

Heathrow's owner, BAA, has set itself the ambitious task of 50 per cent of passengers arriving at the airport by public transport.

Starting next summer, trains will run from Paddington station to the airport four times an hour from dawn until late. The trip to the central area (Terminals One, Two and Three) should take a flat 15 minutes, with Terminal Four five minutes further on. If your airline has not included QQP on your itinerary, you can pay for the trip on board - or pay in several currencies, including the euro, at ticket machines.



In theory, the tube should represent the simplest and most efficient means of getting to Heathrow. In practice it can be one of the longest - and most stressful.

The Heathrow Express was due for completion this year, but because of tunnelling problems at the airport it is not now planned to open until June 1998. A stop-gap scheme is expected to be introduced before the end of the year: the Heathrow Fast Train. This will involve a train from Paddington to a new station, Heathrow Junction, and a bus from there to the terminals. The scheduled journey time is 30 minutes, and the fare will be £5. When the Heathrow Express finally begins, the trip length should be halved and the fare will probably double.

In the meantime, all the other options have been considered for the most comprehensive survey so far of airport links. I have spent the year sampling alternative ways to cover the 15 miles from the Eurostar terminal at Waterloo to Heathrow. To maintain a level runway, I set a rule to avoid peak travel times. Stress factors are rated out of a maximum 10.

It hasn't been fun, it hasn't been clever, but it has been instructive.

Airbus
What could be better than being picked up right outside the airport terminal by a big red bus? Answer: being picked up right outside the airport terminal by a big red bus that goes straight to London, rather than cruising around the rest of the airport first.

Airbus A1 is an extra-luxurious double-decker that collects passengers from outside the arrivals hall and deposits them at Victoria station. Unfortunately, if you board at Terminal Two then you will see a lot of Heathrow - including a little-known coach station around the back of Terminal Three - before passing Terminal Two about 15 minutes after you left it.

Once on the motorway, though, you can expect a smooth, fast trip into London.

To reach Waterloo, you will need to jump into a cab.

Fare: £6 bus fare plus £4 cab fare. Time: 60 minutes. Stress factor: 5.

Taxi
Whether you start at Waterloo or Heathrow, you can expect a

queue. But a cab is a reliable, if expensive, link.

Fare: £38 including a 10 per cent tip. Time: 40 minutes. Stress factor: 2.

Thames Trains
Take the Bakerloo Line northbound from Waterloo to discover the existing fast-link from Paddington station. Hop on a "Thames Turbo" to Hayes & Harlington, step up from the station and climb aboard the bus to Heathrow Central. This journey sounds messy, but if the connections work it can be swifter than the Tube.

Fare: £5.10. Time: 60 minutes (though if you just miss the train or the bus it could be a quarter-hour longer). Stress factor: 3 (though this could double if the connections failed).

South West Trains
If your destination is Terminal Four and you are travelling light, this is the ideal link. A train from Waterloo to Feltham takes less than 30 minutes, and the airport is a half-hour hike from there. I felt more relaxed arriving by this route than by any other.

Stretford limousine
After an overnight flight from San Francisco, I couldn't quite figure out what my friends Har-

Fare: £3.20. Time: 60 minutes. Stress factor: 1.

Bicycle

Cycling from Waterloo station to Heathrow airport, you head more or less due west. This happens to be counter to the prevailing winds. But a hike removes all potential problems with public transport and traffic congestion. All goes fine until the last half-mile, which is through the tunnel beneath the northern runway. Until three years ago, this was a dedicated cycle/pedestrian route; then it was opened up to cars, which chase the unfortunate cyclist - as in the film *Duel* - through the tunnel.

Fare: nil. Time: 80 minutes. Stress factor: 1 until the tunnel, then 9.

Hitch-hiking

This has genuinely been in quest to cover all the options. Starting to thumb from outside Waterloo station is not a sensible prospect. So I took the tube to Turnham Green, walked down to Chiswick High Road and out to the start of the M4. Even with a sign reading "Heathrow Please - flight at 10.45", it took three lifts to reach the airport. Not recommended, except as a bet.

Fare: £1.80. Time: 120 minutes. Stress factor: 7.

Night bus

The cheapest public transport option is also the smoothest - once you have dragged yourself out of bed. Start walking across Hungerford Bridge at around 4.15am. The 4.35am departure of bus N97 from Trafalgar Square, with its curious cargo of clubbers, cleaners and airport personnel, trundles around west London before winding up at Heathrow's central bus station.

Fare: £1.20. Time: 90 minutes. Stress factor: 8 upon walking up; 1 for the journey itself.

Tube
After an overnight flight from San Francisco, I couldn't quite figure out what my friends Har-



Bus lanes along the motorway certainly speed up the journey to the airport - but if you're unlucky you could find yourself being taken round the houses at Heathrow itself

riet and Jonathan were doing riot and Jonathan were doing turning up at dawn at Heathrow. When the 40-ft limousine turned up at the kerbside, and half-a-dozen other pals popped out, I realised this was not your ordinary airport transfer. The Moët was first to be cracked open, followed shortly by a particularly robust Stolichinaya. What better way to end a hontymoon?

Fare: too polite to ask. Time: who cares. Stress factor: nil, though it is surprising the gestures one gets from less well-endowed road users.

Tube
It had to happen. For each of

the above experiments, I allowed plenty of time to catch the flight. For what should have been the easiest of the lot, I trusted in the schedules.

The task was simple: my flight was just before noon, so I had to arrive at Heathrow at 11.10am. Leaving Waterloo at 10am would, I was assured, provide plenty of time.

It was all going remarkably well until just past Earl's Court, when the train began to stop between stations for no apparent reason. At Acton Town, the Piccadilly Line equivalent of purgatory, it paused for 15 minutes while two other trains came and went; nobody told we poor pas-

sengers that crossing the platform might enhance our chances of catching our flights.

Eventually the train arrived at 11.30am. When the doors slid open, the scene resembled an Olympic sprint final as everyone rushed for their flight. In the race to Terminal One, I trailed in a poor third behind a sprightly Aer Lingus stewardess and a red-faced German businessman.

The flight had already closed.

With competitors like the Piccadilly Line, the Heathrow Express need have no fear about its chances of success.

Fare: £3.20. Time: 90 minutes. Stress factor: 10.

Psst! Wanna change money? No thanks, I've got my flexible friend

Changing money on foreign trips can be a time-consuming and costly business. But with plastic cards now accepted almost everywhere, it is also becoming unnecessary, argues David Watts.

Money, money, money. It is the *raison d'être* of business travel, and also indispensable to go anywhere further than your desk. But until the euro becomes established, the average business traveller will continue to battle with conversion rates and hureaux de change, preferably without losing too much of the company's cash in transaction costs.

As a basic rule of thumb, the answer is to exchange your money as few times as possible. Paying more commission than you need is just giving money away. Each time, you lose about five per cent because of the buy and sell rate spread used by exchange bureaux. Travellers' cheques can be even more expensive than currency notes since you pay commission to buy them and then there is often a charge to turn them back into cash. Travellers' cheques denoted in currency also have their value eroded by the buy and sell rates applied. If you add up all these charges and devaluations over the course of a business trip, you've probably given away the equivalent of a slap-up dinner or two for valuable contacts.

A single European currency would have some advantages for travellers by getting rid of the need to change money when making trips between member countries. Of course, things would still cost varying amounts in the different countries but the euro in your pocket would be the same, so all the exchange costs and confusion would be gone. But why wait for the politicians? You can already simplify your travelling fi-



- Paying with plastic: places where you can expect to pay by credit card for most tourist/business needs, where perhaps you wouldn't expect to be able to: Colombia, Peru, Philippines, Thailand, Venezuela.
- Paying with plastic: places where you rarely can, where perhaps you would expect to be able to: Bulgaria, China, Czech Republic, the Gambia, Hungary.
- Getting cash: places that offer tourist-friendly Automatic Teller Machines, where perhaps you wouldn't expect them: Colombia, Mexico, Turkey.
- Getting cash: places that don't offer tourist-friendly Automatic Teller Machines, where perhaps you would expect them: Belize, Brazil (though Visa is acceptable in some places), Costa Rica, Japan (though MasterCard is becoming increasingly acceptable), New Zealand, Switzerland (MasterCard more likely to be accepted than Visa).
- Where MasterCard is more acceptable than Visa: Egypt, Germany, Switzerland.
- Where Visa is more acceptable than MasterCard: Cyprus, Gibraltar, Philippines, Poland, United Arab Emirates.
- Where any US-issued credit card is unacceptable: Cuba.

Compiled from information supplied by Barclaycard, and travellers' reports.

nances and make them cheaper - and not just in Europe. A single monetary system already operates around the globe and offers competitive exchange rates, low charges and great versatility.

Plastic cards have been the mainstay of my travel finances for several years, and at the dawn of the 21st century sure-

mote corner of the world with nothing but your flexible friend for company, check with the card provider on the level of coverage you can expect in your destination. If your cards work through the Visa or MasterCard system then you've got most of the globe covered.

You can get local currency from ATMs or cash advances over the counter from local banks. It's just one transaction and most cards charge a commission less than or equal to exchange bureaux. You may also be able to make purchases directly with no commission or handling charge, in such cases my card uses an equivalent sell rate adjusted by just 2.65 per cent from the spot rate.

Despite their expense, travellers' cheques are popular because part of the cost goes towards insuring them, so if they're lost or stolen they're replaced. But is the cost justified? Your normal travel insurance should cover the loss of several hundred pounds worth of cash, so you can benefit from the lower costs of using your cards to get currency, confident in the knowledge that your wealth is still protected.

Plastic cards are also much more useful than cash or travellers' cheques when booking flights or hotels, since one phone call will confirm the deal. If you're relying on pieces of paper, your seat or bed may be sold to another business traveller because you can't hand over the money until you arrive. Add the benefit of the travel and purchase insurance that you get with many cards and you must be on to a winner.

No ordering of money in advance, no trip to the bank to collect and sign the travellers' cheques, no carrying high-value, bulging wallets. Just simple, modern technology. All you have to do is pay the bill when you get back.

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In London, small can be beautiful

London remains Britain and Europe's premier business city. But what alternatives are there to faceless chain hotels? Rhianon Batten checks out some less conventional - but characterful - places to check in.

Hazlitt's, 6 Frith Street (0171-434 1771)

The inside of the hotel is so contrasting to the surrounding chaos of Soho that the first impression is one of complete surprise. A staircase takes you up from the elegant townhouse entrance as if you were entering the home of a wealthy relative, stuffed with interesting four poster beds to try out, pictures to peer at and unusual furnishings to toy with.

The bookcase in the drawing room is impressively filled with the books of famous authors who've stayed here. Each of the cosy rooms is packed with sturdy antique furniture and almost all the bathrooms are equipped with pretty free-standing baths. The only slight fault may be that rooms at the front may be rather noisy. Single rooms cost £115, double rooms £148 and the one suite available £205. The prices do not include VAT or breakfast, which is £6.75.

Number Sixteen, 16 Summer Place (0171-589 5232)

The entrance of this hotel is currently marked out by lavender and rose tubs and the place is full of fresh flowers. The rooms are each named after a different colour with shades such as suede and lemon giving the impression that you've stepped into the Dulux catalogue. From the sound of a fountain lapping away in the garden to the sun-coloured drawing room, all

in all this is a very relaxing setting. The rooms are homely but oozing with style and the garage and conservatory are a real haven. Single rooms cost £80-115 and doubles £150-180. The price includes continental breakfast and VAT.

The Bulldog Club (0171-341 9495)

Costs £25 for annual membership and operates like a five star bed and breakfast organisation. Membership entitles you to stay in one of the homes on its list, either in London or in the countryside and all the properties are equivalent to five-star standard. Visitors receive the usual benefits of staying in a plush hotel, including full British breakfast, and all the London properties cost £95 per night for a double room with private bathroom down to £65 per night for a single room with shared bathroom.

The Beaufort, 33 Beaufort Gardens (0171-584 5252)

The hotel atmosphere is very warm and informal, rather as if you've stepped into someone else's house, with apples on the coffee table and children under the sofa. You're given a front door key on arrival and the hotel looks like a well-kept private house on a pretty Georgian square. Room prices range from £130 for a small single with shower to £185 for a large double with bath and shower. These prices don't include VAT but they do include continental breakfast, telephone and fax services, 24-hour champagne, service, afternoon tea and all drinks.

Deluxe doubles and the junior suite cost £230 and £240, not including VAT. Crucially for the business traveller, other facilities include access to a nearby health club, light snacks during the day and airport pick-up or drop-off.

You don't have to break the bank to be in business abroad

For those without an unlimited expenses account, there are cheaper options - and they are not all bad, as Sue Wheat discovered while attending a conference in Brussels.

Not everybody who travels on business has a big expense account. Some of us are instructed to keep our expenses to a minimum - and that doesn't mean just leaving the mini-bar intact. In my case, travelling to a conference in Brussels on behalf of two charities I was representing, meant finding the cheapest accommodation I could, without jeopardising my professional performance the next day.

Maison Internationale at 205 Chaussee de Wavre near the centre of Brussels, was the option I chose. Some might scorn it as a youth hostel by any other name. But it is in fact perfectly positioned for anyone visiting the European Parliament and meeting with MEPs, business people and lobbyists, based in the area. (This could explain why business people vastly outnumbered backpackers.) I took left out of the hostel, walk for five minutes past various building sites and you are in the hub of the European Parliament's administration.

Maison Internationale's facilities are perfectly adequate - although business people with primadonna-like tendencies would do best to stay away. When you arrive (check-in before 11pm) you rent clean sheets and pillow cases for 125 francs, (£2) can make yourself a hot drink, buy a beer from the bar, or relax in your room.

You don't have to share a dorm - I splashed out and went for a single room (BF660)

including breakfast). No matter how hard you hunt, a TV will not be found - so a good book is necessary. Bathroom and shower facilities are shared and perfectly clean. Breakfast - which included cereal, toast, meats, cheeses and tea or coffee - competed well with other hotel breakfasts I've had, although washing up your own plates and cutlery is probably a morning activity we could all do without before a 9am meeting.

Finding Maisoo Internationale was probably the most difficult part of my stay. When I phoned to book from London and asked which underground station it was near, the man on reception responded with Basil Fawlty-style unhelpfulness: "I do not know, Madam - I live 80 km away." When I pressed him, he finally informed me that it was near Troon metro. The walk from Troon to the hostel takes about 20 minutes - not particularly easy if you have luggage, if it is at night, and your map is of guide book quality. I only realised the full extent of his unhelpfulness, however, when on leaving the hostel I found out that I could have got a train directly from Brussels' central train station to Gare du Quartier Leopold - only two minutes' walk from the hostel. Troon is indeed the nearest metro, but the train is the most sensible way of getting there.

One and a half days of intense lobbying left me exhausted and without any energy to use my remaining afternoon window shopping in Brussels. I returned to Maison Internationale and went up to the roof garden. Here I stretched out on a garden bench, used my briefcase as a pillow, and, warmed by the autumn sun, slept for two hours. Judging by my brief trip around Brussels, it is one of the few green areas available to relax in.

Maison Internationale, Tel 00 32 2 648 9787

Fares are one way based on round-trip purchase from London Luton with Saturday night stay required. Prices exclude tax and subject to availability with limited seats. Tickets are non-refundable and non-changeable. Milan served in partnership with Azzurri Air.

*Nice effective 12.12; £39 price valid until 19.12. Join 'Destinations': 10 returns, one free! For our European Vacations brochure, call 01293 886006. Call us now or contact your travel agent.

27/BUSINESS TRAVEL

Regional airports still waiting in the wings

With Heathrow and Gatwick at full capacity, Britain has plenty of less crowded alternative airports. But, writes Neil Taylor, business travellers are failing to take advantage of their local facilities.

"Born Again". Most Bristolians will have confronted this slogan which took up the prime city-centre poster sites abandoned by the political parties after the election in May.

Few can have guessed which product felt it needed messianic zeal to promote itself - it was in fact what used to be the local airport. However the message was now very different. Gone was Lulsgate and here was Bristol International, following Rhoose and Turnhouse now similarly metamorphosed into Cardiff and Edinburgh. A recent candid press release from Bristol Airport shows the battle it still has to fight with Heathrow and Gatwick. Although there are five flights a day from Bristol to Amsterdam, in 1996 74,000 people from the South West still chose to fly from Heathrow.

Regional airports now have to wage several battles simultaneously.

Firstly figures such as these show how they have to fight local ignorance about the scheduled services they offer. Secondly they have to fight each other, to encourage new airlines to start an international service. Once airlines make such a move, few result in failure. Air UK/KLM and Aer Lingus pioneered such routes, Air France, Sabena and SAS have followed. Manchester has also been successful in pioneering long-haul routes to North America and to East Asia.

Thirdly, these airports are rivals for overlapping custom. Thousands of potential passengers can choose between say Prestwick and Glasgow, or



Long haul: Manchester airport has successfully introduced routes to North America and East Asia

Manchester and Liverpool. East Anglia is a battleground between Cambridge and Norwich.

In seducing custom from Heathrow and Gatwick they all have the same, but effective bait such as cheap or free car-parking, shorter check-in times, good public transport links and above all, the absence of the M25.

A rather different agenda applies to Luton and Stansted airports. Fog recently diverted an Estonian Air flight from Gatwick to Luton. I expect many of the Estonians on board were happier to arrive at an airport closer in size to Tallinn than the more formidable Gatwick. Any British person not living south of the Thames

would have preferred the quicker journey home and the non-payment of a Gatwick Express ticket.

Low-cost carriers such as Debonair, easyJet and Ryanair have introduced many travellers to these airports and as these airlines continue to expand, the airports will thrive with them to the detriment of both English regional airports and the other London ones.

The main difficulty for Luton and Stansted has been to convince foreign carriers that they are a more sensible London alternative both for the UK market and for their own. The number of over-subsidised national airways quite happily pay high charges for hopeless slots at Heathrow and Gatwick gives a newly-enhanced mean-

ing to "folie de grande".

British Airways must have an increasingly difficult task in maintaining and winning custom outside London whenever transfers at Heathrow are involved. The airline's current winter timetable might seem to offer many logical routings - Inverness to Amsterdam via London for instance - but the small print reveals a three-hour wait at Heathrow, and of course conceals the direct flight operated by rival Air UK which flies Inverness-Amsterdam non-stop in one hour 35 minutes.

Glaswegians returning from Moscow may be tempted by the 75-minute connecting time allowed between Heathrow Terminal Four and Terminal One but over-zealous Russian im-

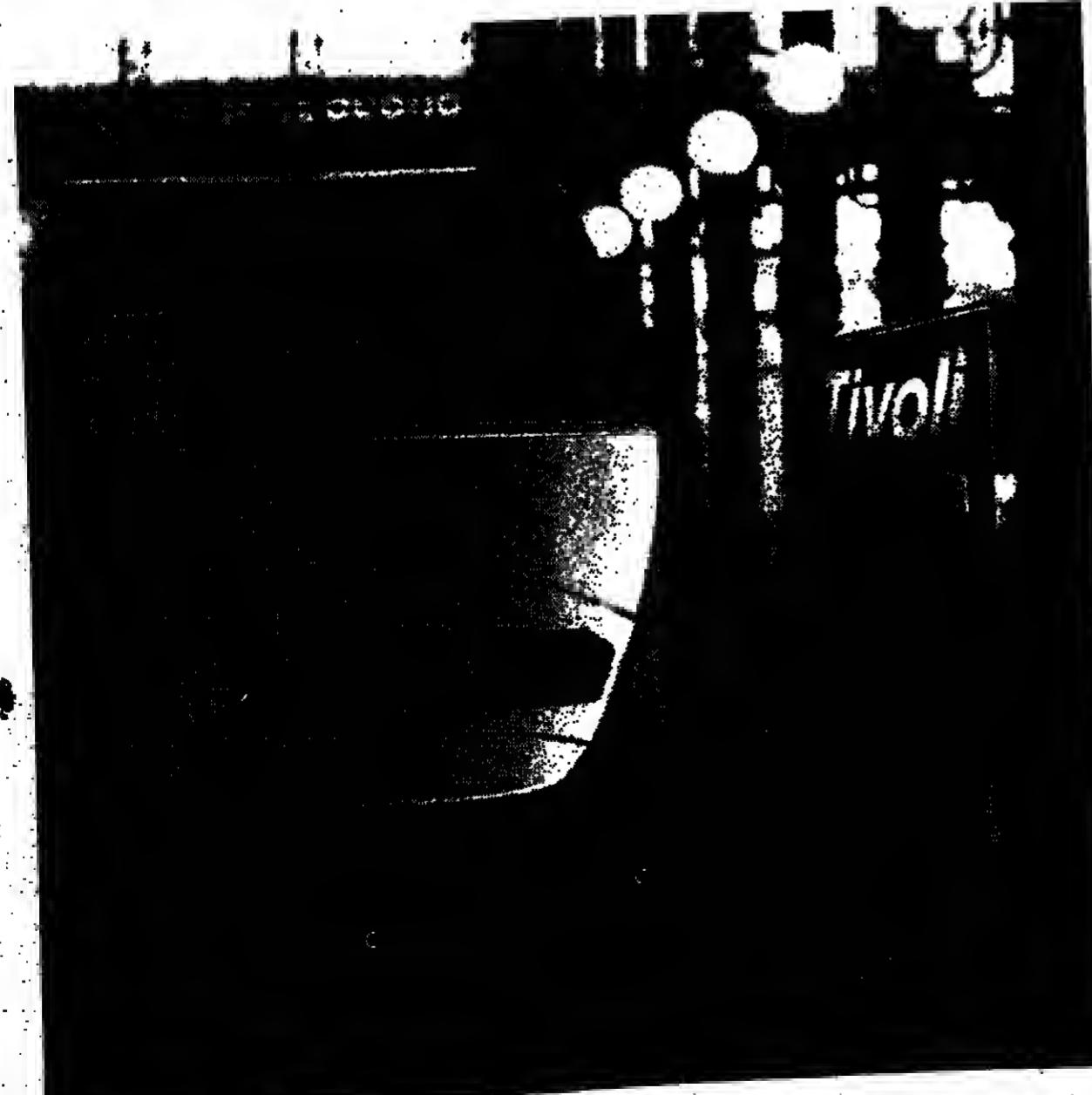
migration controllers combined with quite rightly zealous Heathrow air traffic controllers all too often lead to a failed connection and future business via Copenhagen, Amsterdam or Brussels.

The latest "Heathrow Flight and Travel Information Guide" (which costs £1, unlike its free of charge regional equivalents) has a tortuous half page trying to explain which passengers need to use their Flight Connections Centre and which do not. It wisely omits altogether information on minimum connecting times to allow eight pages for a list of every shop in every terminal. In contrast to this, all regional airports revel in promoting single terminal continental hubs as an alter-

native to Heathrow. Amsterdam used to sell itself as the fourth London airport before Stansted and City became serious challengers. It now only has competitors in the UK but also many in mainland Europe. Copenhagen and Helsinki have creamed off most of the Baltic and CIS traffic; Dublin even offers US immigration services as an incentive to use Aer Lingus regional links.

When can regional airports finally claim success? Clearly when they finally persuade Londoners to abandon their addiction to Heathrow or Gatwick. If 74,000 travellers from the West Country "enjoy" a journey to Heathrow, what does it take to encourage one in the opposite direction?

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Some handy hints for haggling with the airlines

Plenty of books claim to offer the secret of cut-price air travel. But until he read Hugo van Reijen's book, Simon Colde treated them all with disdain. Now he's first in the check-in queue for Karachi.



Hugo van Reijen: a keen eye for the best buys

Declaration of interest: I have met Hugo van Reijen, author of *Why Not Fly Cheaper?* In fact, I very recently bought him a drink. But that was mainly to thank him for writing the closest that the business traveller will get to a Bible (besides the Gideon edition that still appears in many hotel rooms).

You may think that *Why Not Fly Cheaper?* is a book or article, or much-fax'd document that you have already read. But Mr van Reijen's paperback is brand new and anything but trivial. It is not a book for amateurs, but a manual for people who have found themselves in the wrong departure lounge, or on the wrong flight, or in the wrong class, once too often.

If you request a fare quote from five different employees in the same airline office, you will most of the time get five different fare quotes, especially if the journey is slightly complicated", says Mr van Reijen. The secret is to know how to interpret the extraordinary complexity of air fare regulations to your maximum advantage, and that is where the book helps.

Take note, though: if all you want is the cheapest return trip from Manchester to Madrid or Stansted to Stockholm, then just phooe around. *Why Not Fly Cheaper?* is intended to exploit the official rules that the airlines have established for themselves on multi-sector itineraries.

The basic rule is that anyone paying full fare is entitled to a great deal more than just tran-

sportation from A to B. Take a simple trip like Edinburgh-London, with a fare of £134. For the same amount you can stop off for the day in Manchester, attending additional meetings and piling up extra Air Miles for zero cost.

Once you look beyond Britain and take into account currency fluctuations, the savings become much more dramatic. A particular favourite of Mr van Reijen is the "Navigator" pass, price £1,199 off-season, which allows 28,500 miles of travel so long as you touch a point in the South Pacific.

The book explains the theories of "maximum permitted mileage" and "directional minimum check", and how best to deal with them. The current best buys are to be found in Pakistan, where official fares to all manner of destinations are much lower than in Britain. Islamabad-London-Buenos Aires in business class, for example, is about half the rate for the ticket between the UK and Argentinian capitals alone.

"I got last week a letter from a couple of honeymooners. They had flown to Pakistan specifically to buy intercontinental tickets", Mr van Reijen recalls. Half an hour later, I booked my ticket to Karachi.

Why Not Fly Cheaper? by Hugo van Reijen is published by Airlife Publishing, 101 Longdon Road, Shrewsbury SY3 9EB.

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28/RUGBY LEAGUE

Truth is too hard to bear for Britain

Australia's latest series victory against Great Britain has served as a sobering reminder that Super League's global pretensions ring hollow. Rugby league, says Dave Holford, now has to bridge a yawning credibility gap here.

The most disturbing aspect of the Test series against Australia which finished on Sunday is not that Great Britain lost but that so many people believe there must have been something fishy about the one match they won.

If I had a quid for everyone – usually, but not always, from outside the game – who told me during the week between the second and third Tests that Britain's victory at Old Trafford was a fix, I would have a tidy little stake for a few side-bets of hard training.

I rest my case. But what does it say about the credibility of the game that a sizeable minority of people could think it possible that the match could have been thrown? Nothing very flattering, I fear.

And, of course, credibility is the name of the game whenever we assess the latest round of damage done by the Australians. They have inflicted more pain this year than most, trouncing British teams in the World Club Championship and then defeating the national side in a Test series for the 12th time in a row.

It is too familiar a scenario to induce any surprise, but in the aftermath of Old Trafford there were those who allowed themselves to dream of the galvanising effect that finally beating them would have.

Yes, it would have been great fun. But it would have obscured a great many things that are wrong the steepest decline in the game in which they play – were overrun in the first



Stuck in the middle: Great Britain's Chris Joynt is overpowered by Australia defenders at Elland Road. Photograph: Allsport

after the 1970 Ashes victory – our last – in Australia.

We could have lost sight of the fact that in a game supposedly full-time professional at its highest level, most of its clubs are run with shambolic amateurism and incompetence. We would have been liable to forget that the sport's central administration cannot devise a strategy and stick to it for more than five minutes.

Instead, the way that our best players – the ones who have made the most of themselves despite the woefully uneven competition in which they play – were overrun in the first

half at Elland Road stands as an eloquent reminder of how much there is to do.

After the débâcle of Great Britain's tour to the South Pacific last year, there were plenty of things about our approach to international rugby that needed to be said. Strangely, the report from the tour manager, Phil Lowe, that should have said them never appeared.

This time, the conclusions should be brought out into the open and a commitment made to following them through. For a start, as the League's chief executive, Maurice Lindsay, has already conceded, the Great

Britain squad needs to become something more permanent than the loose agglomeration of coaches and players which gets together only when foreign opposition is appearing over the horizon.

The Great Britain coach, Andy Goodway, also wants to introduce an intermediate level of competition for aspiring international players – a national B team that could play developmental league countries.

Of course, this all costs money and the catastrophic way in which the News Ltd hand-out was doled out to clubs so expert at wasting it has

ensured that there is nothing in any central pot with which to finance it.

The lesson of the WCC and this Test series has been that international competition – even one-sided international competition – attracts coverage in areas that are not normally saturated in rugby league.

But Super League's "global vision" remains an unproven boast. Next year is supposed to feature a World Cup. More worrying than the usual concern about how Britain will perform are hints that the competition may not even take place.

It is disappointing to have lost yet another series to Australia, but we should not look at the deciding game at Elland Road in isolation. For 10 years Great Britain teams have been capable of competing at this level on occasion. But what we don't have to do is play at that level week after week.

Players like Andy Farrell are as good as any in the world. Simon Haughton showed what a prospect he is and Kris Radlinski's defence was brilliant.

But they suffer from what I found when I played at Wigan. We could play St Helens one week and the intensity of that was as great as in any match anywhere.

After that, however, you could have three relatively easy matches, which only serve to develop bad habits in players.

We still produce the quality of players, but not the quantity – and this is something to do with the quality of coaching, not just at first-team level but right down to the under-10s.

And we should not rely too much on the excuse that, compared with Australia, we are drawing on a relatively small population for our players. There are organisations which overcome that problem. A football team such as Ajax, for instance, has a relatively small catchment area, but, because it has the right coaching structures, the Dutch club has one of the best production lines in the game.

Australia do have an advantage, because even the people coaching small children have a good grounding in the game. It is part of their culture; they hear Peter Sterling on television every week, explaining the technicalities.

In Britain, we rely on willing volunteers, of whatever standard or level of knowledge.

One way to increase our player pool is to try to attract those who have not made it in other sports. They might have failed as footballers, runners, boxers or whatever, but they have good habits and a certain level of athleticism.

If they have that, they can learn the skills of the game in a couple of years; I believe this is an area where we should make a real push. A player like Gorden Tallis, say, is first and foremost an outstanding athlete, who has acquired enough technical ability to be effective.

Yet it is not all doom and gloom. Rugby league has many strengths in this country. The players and the fans still have a rapport with each other which has long since been lost in other sports. That is something that has to be maintained and nurtured.

Also, the training and conditioning that rugby league players experience is streets ahead of what goes on at Premiership football clubs.

So it is not a case of us doing everything wrong. It is more a matter, as we saw again at Elland Road, of the Australians still doing it that bit better.

– Phil Clarke is a former captain of Great Britain

Time to capitalise on the game's strengths

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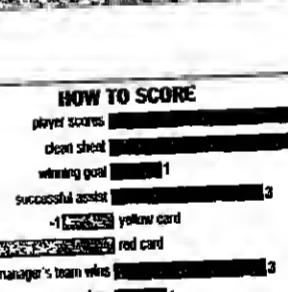
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PHILIPS



Today we publish the latest results of The Independent Fantasy Football League. Because of this weekend's international games, there are no changes to the player scores. The league table includes all scores up to November 9th.

This month's winner is Jessica Plews from London. With a monthly total of 120 points, Jessica has won a pair of tickets to England's next home international.

If a player is given a Yellow Card they lose 1 point, if a player is given a Red Card they lose 3 points. Own goals, either scored or conceded, do not count.

The Premiership Manager that you choose will be awarded 3 points if their real-life team wins, 1 point is awarded if they draw and no points are given if they lose.

Updated player scores and league tables will be published every Tuesday in *The Independent* and repeated the following Sunday in *The Independent on Sunday*.

LEAGUE TABLE

POS	NAME	TEAM	POINTS
1	Mrs Les Wild	Americo	534
2	Mr Chris King	Seaking Victory	534
3	Mr Phil Toller	Pin Ups 4	534
4	Mr David Evans	Booden End Boys	534
5	Mr John Cox	Southville FC	534
6	Mr March Pawley	Robert Rovers	533
7	Mr S Srai	The Unscrupulous	532
8	Mr David Ashton	Billy Boys 2nd II	532
9	Mr Archer	No Wright	532
10	Mr P Green	Simply The Best	532
11	Mr Sowers Scott	Powrie Rangers	532
12	Mr Alasdair Choudhury	The Dream Team	530
13	Mr E Gromley	Niddles 9th II	529
14	Mr J McCrossan	Celtic Warriors	528
15	Mr Stewart Scott	Washed Up Army	527
16	Mr Chris Thomas	Scouring Extras	527
17	Mr Ian Boyce	Woolly Blunders	526
18	Mr David Baker	Opie V	526
19	Mr A Wriggins	Tony's Bracy	526
20	Mr Tom Lyons	Diana's Demons	526
21	Mr D M Bremerton	Edna United	526
22	Mr Tony Brander	Wow For Short	524
23	Mr Brady	Look Lively	523
24	Mr Ken Boyle	Clogton Rovers	522
25	Mr Michael Richard	Aller Lambing	521
26	Mr Trevor Russ	Sunny's Soccer Scorchers	520
27	Mr Kilkerty	The Killer Bees	520
28	Mr David Baker	Dead Beat	520
29	Mr O Depoit	Quick Start	508
30	Mr Steven Mann	Rebecca Rovers	508
31	Mr S Salt	One Way City	504
32	Mr David Boreham	Borham United	504
33	Mr G Bell	Scouring Sounds	504
34	Mr John Cox	Retro Rovers	503
35	Mr J McCrossan	Washed Up Army	503
36	Mr David Ashton	Billy Boys 3rd II	503
37	Mr P Toller	Pin Ups 2	502
38	Mr Ian Down	Ruthless	502
39	Mr K Brady	Final Selection	502
40	Mr G Ford	Urbane Rovers	501
41	Mr Mike Mitchell	Enduring Image	501
42	Mr G Whitthead	The True Team	501
43	Mr J McCrossan	Just Like Us	501
44	Mr David Adroyd	Billy's Boys	501
45	Mr David Ashton	I've Scored But I Will Finish	499
46	Mr Mike Evans	Miles A Team	499
47	Mr A Mitchell	The Eye For It	499
48	Mr A Mitchell	The Zebra	499
49	Mr A Cunningham	Valley	499

GOALKEEPERS

CODE PLAYER	TEAM	Wk	OF	VALU	Wk	OF	VALU	CODE PLAYER	TEAM	Wk	OF	VALU	Wk	OF	VALU
454 Anderson	ARS	0	37	40	0	4	25	560 Lundstrom	SOU	0	16	12	0	51	844
455 Dugdale	ARS	0	37	40	0	4	25	561 Shapka	LEE	0	20	11	0	545	845
456 Lukic	ARS	0	37	40	0	4	25	562 Ribeiro	LEE	0	8	25	0	547	846
457 Massington	ARS	0	27	40	0	4	25	563 Parker	LEE	0	1	25	0	548	847
458 Morris	AV	0	19	35	0	4	25	564 Taylor	LEE	0	21	21	0	549	848
459 Watson	BAR	0	19	35	0	4	25	565 Izett	LEE	0	30	17	0	550	849
460 Lewis	BLA	0	26	32	0	4	25	566 Morrison	LEE	0	11	32	0	551	850
461 Flowers	BLA	0	12	32	0	4	25	567 McNamee	LEE	0	10	32	0	552	851
462 Hoyle	BLA	0	26	32	0	4	25	568 McNamee	LEE	0	10	32	0	553	852
463 Houghton	BLA	0	26	32	0	4	25	569 McNamee	LEE	0	10	32	0	554	853
464 Branigan	CHE														

The decline of the English front row is one of the mysteries of the age



ALAN
WATKINS
ON
RUGBY

A lot of rugby followers will, I suspect, be fed up with the game even before they have started their Christmas dinners. They will have seen too much of it and certainly read too much about it. Last Saturday and Sunday witnessed not one but four internationals, all involving countries from the southern hemisphere. The only European country not to have been on display was Scotland.

By switching channels and using the video recorder it was possible to be in two places at once, which was probably a bad thing to be. Nevertheless, it enables us to establish a world ranking: 1 New Zealand, 2 South Africa, 3 France, 4 Australia. And who are to fill the

fifth position? Many readers would doubtless reply "England, of course", assuming they had not had made England No 4.

I am not so sure. True, England scraped a draw with Australia through the boot of a semi-concussed Mike Catt. Perhaps Clive Woodward, the coach, should arrange for him to take a bump before he tries every kick. For previously, though he had managed four successful penalties, Catt had not looked at all happy in his execution. He missed several he should have put over.

So did John Eales for Australia. He missed four of them. The English rugby correspondent who wrote afterwards that

the draw was "a fair result" seemed to be showing altogether too much indulgence towards his native land.

Yes, I know perfectly well that try-counts can be misleading. On this occasion they were not. George Gregan scored an excellent try for Australia. Ben Tami's a good one.

England looked like scoring only once - when Adedayo Adebayo was pulled down just short of the line which, if he had been playing for Bath, he would have crossed through sheer determination. Though he seemed to be suffering at times from a touch of the Underwoods (which may be defined as a tendency to gaze into distant space while forgetting

where the touchline is) he deserves another chance.

So does David Rees on the other wing. So also does Will Greenwood, who should, however, be played in his proper position of inside centre, and not messed about as he was on Saturday. Still, the only English backs able to leave the field with credit were Kyran Bracken, Catt and Matt Perry.

Quite why that illiterate Twickenham crowd have it in for Catt continues to elude me. As a sheer footballer, Perry is his only rival. But he is not an international place-kicker. Jon Callard and Paul Grayson are. It is folly for Woodward to take England into the Five Nations when Ireland, Wales

and France's kickers will be, respectively, Eric Elwood, Neil Jenkins and Christophe Lamaison.

I do not suppose Woodward will take my advice to retain Catt but find room for Callard or Grayson. It is unexciting advice, out of kilter with the bold spirit of the times. I think it sensible, that is all.

The English forwards who can take comfort from Saturday's outing are even fewer: Garath Archer and Lawrence Dallaglio. It may be that Tony Diprose and Richard Hill were less prominent than usual - certainly Hill was putting himself about less - because the players in front of them spent much of the afternoon walking back-

wards for Christmas. Even so, Tim Rodber and Neil Back surely now deserve a chance.

The decline of the English front row is one of the mysteries of the age. Only a few seasons ago it consisted of Jeff Probyn, Brian Moore and Jason Leonard. The tallest was Probyn at 5ft 10in. The heaviest was Leonard, then under 16 stones. By Antipodean, or even French, standards it was tiny. Nevertheless, it could take on any trio in the world.

Probyn and Moore have departed the international scene. Leonard is heavier but not quite the force he was, even though on Saturday he had been restored to his proper position at loose head. Perhaps it is time to put the

old workhouse out to grass and replace him with Kevin Yates of Bath. Yates's colleague Victor Ubogu - returned from the rug-by dead - could be on the other side, with Richard Cockerill retaining his place as hooker.

One of the odd things about the modern game is that a hooker is not judged by whether he is any good at hooking or even nippy about the field but by whether he can throw the ball accurately into the line-outs. But why should a hooker be required to be good at this? Why not return the duties to the wing, or continue with Jacques Fouroux's short-lived experiment of giving the task to the scrum-half? I am only asking.



Pete Sampras serves his way to victory over Yevgeny Kafelnikov in the ATP Tour Championship final. Photograph: AFP

Sampras confirms his status as the master of his art

He has been described as dull - boring, even - but when it came to voting for the top man of the past 25 years, the professional tennis community decided that Pete Sampras was simply the best. John Roberts reports.

While Luciano Pavarotti was making the draw for the ATP Tour Championship at Hanover, Pete Sampras mentioned to Greg Rusedski that he had attended a concert the previous evening. In his laid-back Californian manner, Sampras paid Pavarotti the highest compliment - "He can sing." Pavarotti no doubt considers that Sampras can play, not that the American needs a great tenor to sing his praises.

To mark the 25th anniversary of the Association of Tennis Professionals, which in 1990 became the ATP Tour, 100 current and past players, tournament directors and members of the media voted for their top 25 players. Sampras was the No 1, just as he has been in the year-end world rankings for the past five years.

The announcement was made on the court on Sunday after 15,000 spectators and millions of television viewers had marvelled at the maestro's performance in winning the ATP Tour Championship for the fourth time. In the final Sampras outclassed Russia's Yevgeny Kafelnikov in every department of the game to triumph 6-3, 6-2, 6-2.

In the ATP hall of fame Sampras received 26 first-place votes and finished with 779 points, 25 points ahead of Sweden's Bjorn Borg. Two of Sampras's fiery compatriots came next, Jimmy

THE BEST IN 25 YEARS OF THE ATP

The top 10	Pts	The best of the rest
1 Pete Sampras	779 (26)	(in alphabetical order)
2 Bjorn Borg	754 (17)	Andre Agassi, Arthur Ashe, Sergi Bruguera, Michael Chang, Jim Courier, Vitus Gerulaitis, Goran Ivanisevic, Thomas Muster, John Newcombe, Yannick Noah, Manuel Orantes, Ken Rosewall, Sam Smith, Michael Stich, Guillermo Vilas.
3 John McEnroe	721 (13)	Vitas Gerulaitis, Goran Ivanisevic, Thomas Muster, John Newcombe, Yannick Noah, Manuel Orantes, Ken Rosewall, Sam Smith, Michael Stich, Guillermo Vilas.
4 Jimmy Connors	634 (9)	Vitas Gerulaitis, Goran Ivanisevic, Thomas Muster, John Newcombe, Yannick Noah, Manuel Orantes, Ken Rosewall, Sam Smith, Michael Stich, Guillermo Vilas.
5 Ivan Lendl	493 (3)	Vitas Gerulaitis, Goran Ivanisevic, Thomas Muster, John Newcombe, Yannick Noah, Manuel Orantes, Ken Rosewall, Sam Smith, Michael Stich, Guillermo Vilas.
6 Boris Becker	446 (0)	Vitas Gerulaitis, Goran Ivanisevic, Thomas Muster, John Newcombe, Yannick Noah, Manuel Orantes, Ken Rosewall, Sam Smith, Michael Stich, Guillermo Vilas.
7 Stefan Edberg	372 (1)	Vitas Gerulaitis, Goran Ivanisevic, Thomas Muster, John Newcombe, Yannick Noah, Manuel Orantes, Ken Rosewall, Sam Smith, Michael Stich, Guillermo Vilas.
8 Rod Laver	360 (14)	Vitas Gerulaitis, Goran Ivanisevic, Thomas Muster, John Newcombe, Yannick Noah, Manuel Orantes, Ken Rosewall, Sam Smith, Michael Stich, Guillermo Vilas.
9 Mats Wilander	209 (0)	Vitas Gerulaitis, Goran Ivanisevic, Thomas Muster, John Newcombe, Yannick Noah, Manuel Orantes, Ken Rosewall, Sam Smith, Michael Stich, Guillermo Vilas.
10 Ivo Karlovic	185 (0)	Vitas Gerulaitis, Goran Ivanisevic, Thomas Muster, John Newcombe, Yannick Noah, Manuel Orantes, Ken Rosewall, Sam Smith, Michael Stich, Guillermo Vilas.

Connors at No 3 and John McEnroe at No 4.

The other day, in conversation with McEnroe, our correspondent asked the turbulent one if he was amused to be regarded as an elder statesman nowadays in view of his rebellious career. He smiled wryly and cited the passage of time. With regard to the perception of Sampras as peerless but colourless, McEnroe pointed out that Borg was not exactly riotous.

Philippe Bouin, of the French daily sports newspaper *L'Equipe*, described Sampras as "an attacking Borg who does not have the devil of a McEnroe, a Connors or a Nastase". From the personality aspect, Borg and Ivan Lendl, were ide-

al counterparts to their rumbustious rivals. These days, the argument goes, there are too many straight men and not enough comedians.

If the vote for Sampras was a commendation for pure tennis, the result of the poll was not a slight on anybody. As an ATP Tour spokesman stressed: "Several of the sport's great players were nearing the end of their careers when the Open era began in 1968 and the ATP was formed in 1972. None the less, such was their impact on men's tennis that voters gave stars such as Laver and Rosewall a great deal of support for the balloting."

The year-end ATP Tour rankings reflect the changing face of the top 10, at least in the peck-

FINAL 1997 ATP WORLD RANKINGS

Leading prize-money winners:	
1 P Sampras (USA)	457 pts
2 H Federer (Swi)	320
3 W Sharapova (USA)	300
4 J McEnroe (USA)	290
5 G Rusedski (GBR)	254
6 S Bruguera (Spa)	250
7 C Moya (Spa)	250
8 G Ivanisevic (Crot)	236
9 T Muster (Aust)	233
10 M Rios (Chi)	231
11 F Kafelnikov (Rus)	229
12 A Corretja (Spa)	227
13 P Korda (Cze)	226
14 G Kuznetsov (Rus)	225
15 G Ivanisevic (Crot)	218
16 F Merkle (Sui)	210
17 T Hermann (Aust)	1929
18 M Philppoussis (Aus)	1908
19 A Costa (Spa)	1778
20 C Polfliet (Fra)	1534

Other British world rankings:
143 A Richardson 312; 151 C Wilson 255; 154 M Petach 225; 216 O Sapsford 205; 225 M Lee 125; 254 L Milligan 12; 255 M Woodforde (Aus); 123 Philppoussis (Aus) 80427; 18 Maitland 104; 304 J Delgado 84; 461 S Cowan 70; 450 A Palmer 53

head of the fleet for the last nine days, with skipper Gunnar Krantz still enjoying a near 300-mile lead on the second-placed Knut Frostad on Innovation Kværner, and 450-plus on Paul Standridge's third-placed Toshiba.

Krantz predicts that the fleet will now enjoy good wind almost all the way into Fremantle, and he should arrive a little warmer than of late following the crew's success in repairing the heater on Swedish Match. Krantz, however, is aware that there is always the possibility of aconcertina effect in a high pressure zone off western Australia which could allow the chasing pack to close up.

Both boats are sailing deep to the south, but are expected to go north of the Kerguelan Islands, along with the rest of the sixty ships trying to catch up with the three leading yachts on the 4,600-second leg from Cape Town to Fremantle.

A quiet little cloud of anger hangs over Grant Dalton in Merit Cup, dumped in eighth place by being too far north to take advantage of the weather systems. However, he has the all-woman crew of EF Education six miles ahead and with only 118 miles between fourth-placed Cayard and the last boat, Hans Bousholte's Brunel Sunergy, there is still plenty of time to move up the fleet in the remaining 2,500 miles.

Swedish Match has sat at the

head of the fleet for the last nine days, with skipper Gunnar Krantz still enjoying a near 300-mile lead on the second-placed Knut Frostad on Innovation Kværner, and 450-plus on Paul Standridge's third-placed Toshiba.

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AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Young on song as 49ers make it 10 wins in a row

Steve Young threw one touchdown and ran for another as the San Francisco 49ers beat Carolina Panthers 27-19 to claim their 10th successive victory and their fifth NFC West title in the last six years.

The Panthers beat the 49ers to the division title last season, and it looked like the veteran San Francisco squad would have an uphill struggle when they opened their season with a defeat in which wide receiver Jerry Rice was injured.

Instead, the 49ers have since coasted to 10 victories, with the Panthers' five wins and six losses making them San Francisco's closest pursuers.

Kansas City kept the race tight in AFC West, courtesy of Pete Stoyanovich's 54-yard field goal as time ran out for the Denver Broncos.

The Chiefs won 24-22, spoiling another fourth-quarter rally by Denver quarterback John Elway, who had moved the Broncos 59 yards in six plays to set up Jason Elam's 34-yard field goal with a minute left. Kansas City's Rich Gannon answered with a 39-yard drive to set up Stoyanovich.

ICE HOCKEY

Storm return to form and top of league

Manchester Storm put their recent slump behind them with an 8-3 win over Basingstoke Bison which lifted them back to the top of the Superleague table on Sunday. Storm had surrendered the top spot to Ayr Scottish Eagles after losing twice in the space of five days to Sheffield Steelers.

Despite the continued absence of injured trio, Jeff Tomlinson, Brad Rubachuk and Troy Neumeier, Storm were on form with period scores of 2-1, 4-0 and 2-2.

Last season's champions, Cardiff Devils, won a set-saw meeting with Sheffield Steelers 4-3, with three goals in the first 10 minutes ultimately proving decisive for the Welsh side.

Newcastle Cobras are finally enjoying the winning feeling following a dismal start to the campaign. After picking up their first points of the season at the ninth attempt on Thursday, they scored a tense 5-4 win over Bracknell Bees. Randy Smith broke the deadlock with his second goal 6min 26sec into sudden-death overtime.

SAILING: WHITBREAD ROUND THE WORLD RACE

Smith and Cayard locked in Southern Ocean duel

Swedish Match is now well past the half-way mark and should win the second leg of the Whitbread Round the World Race by a street.

However, as *Smart Alexander* reports from Fremantle, the real racing is taking place down the fleet.

A battle royal is looming between Britain's Lawrie Smith on Silk Cut and the American Paul Cayard, who replaced him on the Swedish yacht EF Language, as the pair career at breakneck speed through the Southern Ocean.

The two were just 22 miles apart yesterday, with Smith averaging 18 knots - having put in a run of 43.5 miles in 24 hours, just three miles outside a world record.

Cayard, meanwhile, had survived the effects of a wave which picked up some sails stowed on the deck and "wiped

out the back half of the lifelines and stanchions on the port side." They lost one sail overboard and are now having to stow the others below, which is making conditions in the cabin extremely wet. The sail was not the only casualty, another unexpected wave having snatched a spinnaker pole.

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hitting high speeds, more gear breakage is expected. The shore crews already trickling into Fremantle know that they will have a lot of work to do and that their pit stopover time is likely to be cut by two or three days. Only Swedish Match is on schedule to complete the leg in 16 days. There will be little time for relaxation.

WHITEB

FOOTBALL

Ferguson looks to South America for £10m deal on Salas

Manchester United have a reputation for producing homegrown talent, but they may be about to spend £10m on a Chilean striker, Marcelo Salas. Alan Nixon reports.

Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, was so impressed with what he saw of Marcelo Salas at the weekend that he has told the Chilean striker's agent to proceed with the deal to bring him to Old Trafford.

Ferguson watched Salas in Chile's World Cup victory over Bolivia. The prolific striker's agent, Pini Zahavi, was due to fly to Argentina yesterday to meet Salas's club, River Plate, in an attempt to reduce the fee from the club's £12m valuation.

United's chief executive, Martin Edwards, is standing by to fly to South America this week if a price can be agreed. Salas is also keen to talk to United and it is understood there would be no problems with his personal terms. "Italian, Spanish and German players all want to play in England — I think it's the best place in the world to play," Ferguson said yesterday. "I think Salas could play here without any problem."

Liverpool are set to go to the High Court to clear the way for Brad Friedel's £2m move to Anfield. The club are angry that

their work permit application for the United States goalkeeper is being held up by red tape. Roy Evans, the manager, wants to fly Friedel in for a debut against Barnsley at Anfield on Saturday, but the Department of Employment and Education are refusing to let Friedel in immediately because they are in a legal wrangle with Portsmouth over their attempt to sign the Australian goalkeeper, Zeljko Kalac.

Liverpool are willing to go to the High Court themselves in the next 48 hours to get Friedel into the country in time to play at the weekend. The club intends to prove that there are players already in England who have poorer international records than Friedel.

Everton have moved off speculation that their chairman, Peter Johnson, is about to sell his controlling interest in the Goodison Park club. After growing rumours that he was on the brink of selling his 24,000 shares, Everton issued a brief statement on his behalf, saying: "There is no truth whatsoever in the recent speculation surrounding chairman Peter Johnson's shareholding at Everton FC."

An Everton spokesman said: "I understand that he and his advisors are making strenuous efforts to obtain the source of this misinformation."

Arsène Wenger admitted to

concern about his players' commercial activities yesterday after leaving Ian Wright out of the side to face Coventry in the Coca-Cola Cup tonight. Wright has not scored in his last four matches and recently told the England coach Glenn Hoddle that he is to do less off the field.

"Ian is a little low on confidence at the moment and asked me how he could change things," Wenger said. "I encouraged him to cut down on off-the-field activities. Some players earn more off the field than they do from their jobs. The problem will have to be solved."

Faustino Asprilla's planned comeback for tonight's Coca-Cola Cup tie against Derby is in doubt. The Newcastle striker, who has missed the last six weeks because of a groin injury, has picked up a virus.

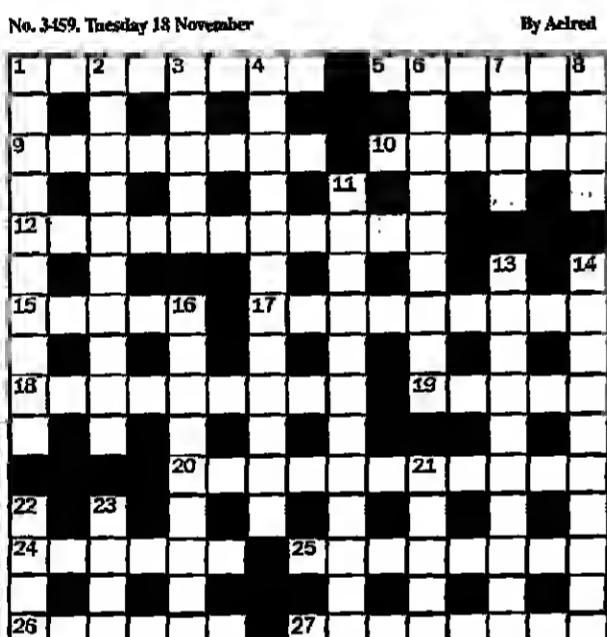
Kevin Dringell, the Stirling manager, is to back the Ivory Coast-born striker Landry Zahaoui-Oni after allegations that he made obscene gestures to Partick Thistle supporters. Police received three complaints after the First Division match at Firbank on Saturday and the matter has been referred to Stirling officials and the Scottish Football Association. However, Dringell intends seeking a meeting with the Scottish Players Union chief, Tony Higgins, claiming his player was racially abused.



Party time: Jamaican fans in Kingston celebrate qualification for the World Cup finals

Photograph: Reuter

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Do create embellishing when you do this (8)
- Intelligence set spy onto revolutionary (6)
- One into gin could be finding means of getting lit up (8)
- The odds in this place would indicate a region of influence (6)
- South Hoy let could be suitable as a holiday place (5,6)
- House allowed to revert to place of entertainment (5)
- You should not look too closely at such present shore changes (9)
- Popular brother, say, in terrible surroundings is not to be seen (9)
- Export the Spanish throw out (5)

DOWN

- Material for covering, say, Gloucester clerics? (11)
- Element of hatred attracted by saint (6)
- Is appropriate to suppress mean painting? (4,4)
- No plus in former selection for England? (6)
- Mustn't upset a new risk-taker (8)
- Woman at length produces childish floral decoration (5,5)
- Producing restricted time to be as good as gold? (10)
- Be sick hearing about miserable person (5)
- Although having crude loaf, say, one has good ancestry (12)
- Cheer plus revels would be wholly inappropriate here (9)
- Sailors were exultant (4)
- Sheep carried by river vessel (4)
- Pompous person could be first thus fed (7,5)
- Coded writing in vault carries no weight (10)
- Art water supply brought by cold pipe to North (4,6)
- Perhaps sauce which has no chance of success? (4,5)
- Have inclination to follow conservative without stain (5)
- Man could be a bit misleading (4)
- Wife left jam to the side (4)

UPRIGHT

- Fire-eater (11)
- DOVER KIDSISTER (10)
- RUSTICATE DUNCE (9)
- UNICE APPROVED (9)
- HIGHWATER FLESH (9)
- LEMUR OBSTINATE (9)
- DODGING PIZZI (9)
- OUTWITHIT POUT (9)
- FOARE EISE (9)
- FIORINCE SMARTLY (9)

MONDAY'S SOLUTION

1. DOSE 2. CLOTHES 3. GROWTH 4. SIGHTS 5. TIDY 6. DODGE 7. PIZZA 8. FISHING 9. LEAPING 10. DODGING 11. FLOWERS 12. FROG 13. FISHING 14. FISHING 15. FISHING 16. FISHING 17. FISHING 18. FISHING 19. FISHING 20. FISHING 21. FISHING 22. FISHING 23. FISHING 24. FISHING 25. FISHING 26. FISHING 27. FISHING

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Footballers in the big league of earners

Football's increased profile and lucrative contracts have put many of its leading players on to British sport's earnings leader board.

According to the BBC Radio 5 Live Sports Yearbook 1996, published next month, 14 footballers take home more than £1m a year with Alan Shearer earning £3.5m.

Ryan Giggs and Paul Ince, the next best football earners, fail to match Shearer between them, while David Beckham could eclipse them all, having earned £1.35m in his second year as a Manchester United regular.

We estimate that the average Premiership footballer earns around £350,000 a year — and that's before sponsorship deals are added on top. Pete Nichols, the Yearbook editor, said:

But football still lags behind sports such as boxing and motor racing, which provide five of the top seven. The biggest British earner was world heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis.

— Myles Hodgson

Britain's 1997 sporting millionaires	
1	Lennox Lewis (Boxing) £6.4m
2	Neaven Hemm (Boxing) £5.8m
3	Damon Hill (Motor Racing) £5.3m
4	Alan Shearer (Football) £5.2m
5	Nick Faldo (Golf) £5.1m
6	Johnny Herbert (Motor Racing) £5.0m
7	David Coulthard (Motor Racing) £4.8m
8	Colin Montgomerie (Golf) £4.6m
9	Ryan Giggs (Football) £4.5m
10	Paul Ince (Football) £4.5m
11	Les Ferdinand (Football) £4.4m
12	Greg Rusedski (Tennis) £4.4m
13	Teddy Sheringham (Football) £4.4m
14	Colin McRae (Rallying) £4.4m
15	Stephen Howard (Snooker) £4.4m
16	Tim Henman (Tennis) £4.4m
17	David Beckham (Football) £3.5m
18	Mike Tyson (Boxing) £3.2m
19	Howard Allison (Boxing) £2.5m
20	Edgar Martínez (Baseball) £2.5m
21	John Barnes (Football) £2.2m
22	Robbie Fowler (Football) £2.2m
23	Ian Wright (Football) £1.5m
24	Paul Gascoigne (Football) £1.1m
25	Paul Merson (Football) £1.1m
26	Mark Blundell (Motor Racing) £1.0m
27	Andy Cole (Football) £1.0m
28	Granicia Le Saux (Football) £1.0m
29	Lee Greenwood (Golf) £1.0m
30	Ian Woosnam (Golf) £1.0m

TENNIS

Wimbledon's £31m profit

Wimbledon, the most successful lawn tennis championship in the history of the game, produced record profits of £31m last summer, an increase of six per cent from 1996.

The 1997 championships set a new attendance record of 436,531, 51,000 up on the year before, and the performance of British players was the best for years, with Greg Rusedski and Tim Henman reaching the quarter-finals of the men's singles.

Television records were also set, with 12.9m watching Henman's match against Paul Haarhuis on "People's Sunday" and similar figures for Henman's quarter-final with Michael Stich and Rusedski's last eight match against Cedric Pioline.

It was far from a great match, but the Jamaicans' Brazilian-style game will not be out of place in the finals.

And in France, the team

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